Literary Essays

KITAB MAHAL

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LITERARY ESSAYS

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PREFACE

The search of human soul to work out a unity in relation to the phantasmagorical diversity of natural phenomenon finds expression in the works of literature. Literature not only yields aesthetic delight, but also helps in the cultivation of a critical faculty which guides the mind in its emancipation from bias and ignorance. Human hopes and aspirations, social values and ethical codes keep on changing with the passion of times and every literary artist takes into account a total view of things so as to formulate an eclectic way of looking at the helical problems of life. So the world of literature is not static ; it is dynamic. Critics and philosophers have always pondered on the ticklish nature of literature, but their conclusions are, to a great extent, contradictory. The present book is nothing but a humble attempt to capture the essence of pedantic controversies, pertaining to literature and its cryptic relation with life.

The present book intends to stimulate new ideas and throw light on the intricate issues which confront the students of literature. Every essay whets the appetite to proceed further and enquire into the *raisoned 'etre* of every literary doctrine and concept.

I record my indebtedness and gratitude to all those critics on whose opinions and judgments I have depended in writing this book.

My final word of gratitude is due to Syed Sardar Javaid who undertook the troublesome job of transforming my manuscript into this pretty book. His patience and enterprise deserve every word of praise.

April, 1975

MIAN M. SAIF-UL-HAQ

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Oscar Wilde

"Literature is news that stays news".

Ezra Pound

"Art is a step taken by nature towards eternity."

Goethe

"Literature must voice the past, reflect the present and mould the future."

Montaigne

"All art is the expression of life in forms of truth and beauty."

Emerson

"In every work of art, there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal."

S. T. Coleridge

1,3,4,5

1 Literature and Life

There is an intimate connection between literature and life. It is, in fact, life which is the subject-matter of literature. Life provides the raw material on which literature imposes an artistic form. Literature is the communication of the writers experience of life, but this connection between literature and life is not so simple as it seems. This problem has been discussed by some of the greatest critics of the world, and their conclusions have been sometimes contradictory. Let us examine the various theories regarding the relation of literature to life in order to arrive at a clear understanding of this complicated problem.

Plato, the great Greek philosopher, was the first to give a serious thought to this problem —— the relation of literature to life. In his discussions he refers mainly to poetry; but what he has said about poetry can be equally applied to literature as a whole. He regards poetry as a mere 'imitation' of life, and thus he condemns the poets. In the Republic, Plato argues that poetry is harmful in its effect on the people; it waters and nourishes their passions and emotions. Moreover, it is based on falsehood because the poet is concerned with the appearance of an appearance. If true reality consists in the ideas of things, of which individual objects are but reflections or imitations, then anyone who imitates those individual objects is imitating an imitation, and so producing something which is still further removed from ultimate reality.

There is an obvious error in Plato's reasoning. Being too much of a philosopher and moralist, he could not see clearly the relation between literature and life. This error was corrected by Plato's pupil, Aristotle. The poet is concerned with truth —— but not the truth of the annalist, the historian, or the scientist. The poet's business is not to write of events that have happened, but of what may happen, of things that are possible in the light of probability or necessity. For this reason poetry is more philosophical, a more serious thing than history. For whilst history deals with the particular things, poetry deals with the universal.

Here, then, we have Aristotle's reply to Plato. Art or literature is not a slavish imitation of reality twice removed from the truth. Presenting, as it must do, individual men or women in the trappings and circumstances of life, it does not leave them there, but pierces to what is significant in action and character, expressing through their words and actions what is true for all human nature. Thus the poet seeks to draw out what is relevant and representative, and to present it harmoniously in a self-contained situation.

Sir Philip Sidney was the next critic who seriously considered the problem of relation between literature and life, and who tried to reply to Plato's charges against poetry. Sidney strives to show that literature does not give an insight into reality, but an alternative to reality, the alternative being in every way superior. For him the ideal world of the poet is of value because it is both a better world than the real world and it is presented in such a manner that the reader is stimulated to try and imitate it in his own practice. Thus the Platonic notion of imitation is transferred from the poet to the reader. The poet does not imitate, but creates; it is the reader who imitates what the poet creates. The world which the artist presents is the one which is moulded by him to his heart's desire ; an ideal world which fulfils his aspirations.

Discussing the relation between literature and life, Dryden points out that imaginative literature gives us an image of human nature. It shows people acting in such a way as to reveal what they are like. He makes no distinction between the image of human nature and the truth about human nature ; the former, if it is 'just', gives the latter. The poet obtains "a just and lively image of human nature" by representing its "passions and humours", and by representing the changes of fortune to which men are subject. It is only when we see a character's relations to changes of fortune that we get a real view of his "passions and humours." If Hamlet's father had not been murdered by his uncle and his mother had not married him, Hamlet would never have been driven to exhibit the true image of his nature. It is the testing circumstances that illuminate character. The function of literature, according to Dryden, is to inform the reader, in a lively and agreeable way, of what human nature is like.

Dryden's plea for realism in literature, which, according to him, is a just image of human nature, was further elaborated by Dr. Johnson. In the preface to his edition of Shakespeare's plays, he praises the playwright because he fulfils precisely Dryden's requirement of "a just and lively image of human nature", and remarks that Shakespeare is the poet of nature, because he "holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners of life". "His characters are not modified by customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world : but they act and speak by the same influence of those general passions and principles by which all men are agitated and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings

of other poets a character is too often an individual, in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species."

Though this is a discussion of Shakespeare, Dr. Johnson has also by implication made an important statement about the nature of imaginative literature, and its relation to life. Dryden has referred to ' a just and lively image of human nature", but Johnson insists on "general" nature. The implication here is that human nature does not change. The poet represents those aspects of human nature which are common to all times and places, and in doing so he presents to us the reality about human nature. Men are fundamentally the same at all times and places, and they differ only in trivialities. Literature illuminates human nature which is unchanging.

Coleridge, the greatest among English critics, emphasised the role of imagination in literature. The poet, according to him, goes beyond the limited and finite nature which he sees with his eyes and hears with his ears, to the infinite totality of Nature, which is conceived by him as the objective thought of God. It is through his imagination that the poet conceives of Nature as the external thought of the Creator. This is the role of primary imagination. But by means of secondary imagination the poet, though bound by nature, recreates it as his own. Therefore the artist is never content to copy nature, but his imagination diffuses, dissolves and recreates the material obtained by his other faculties, senses, reason, etc., and works in the same manner as the Divine Imagination works. Thus in artistic creation, there is "imitation", but not "copying" because there is "likeness and unlikeness" or "sameness and difference".

Thus the relation between literature and life is not so simple. Both reality and imagination play their role in great literature. Literature is not merely a photographic copy of real life, nor is it a complete denial of life. The writer derives his inspiration from real life, but all the material that he gathers by means of his various faculties is subjected to a process of recreation in the mechanism of imagination, and the resultant work is not the same as the material which provides the inspiration for the creative process. This is, in fact, the fundamental point in the relation between literature and life. Art is a manifestation of the essential creativity of nature, through the creative mind of the artist.

It is mainly on account of the predominant role of imagination in literature that the great writers present in their works what is universal and valid for all men and at all times. Of course, they cannot ignore the manners and customs of their times which are clearly represented in their works, but by means of imagination, they reach the core of reality and truth. Artistic truth cannot be apprehended in nakedness; it is always clad in garments which belong to a given period. The artist's greatness comes not from some national peculiarity, but from the depth of vision which turns the singular into the universal, and embraces the whole of mankind. The works of Dante,

Goethe, Shakespeare and Tolstoy prove the accuracy of this idea.

Realism in literature does not mean, as is generally believed, that the writers deals with appearances, and gives us a copy of them, but it means that he dives deep to grasp the unchanging reality and truth which lie behind the changing phenomena of life. That is why in true realistic literature imagination plays an important role. The true artist is one who has imagination and who is aware of the discrepancy between the truth of life and the outward appearances in which it is presented to the ordinary man. To so-called realistic writers like Ben Jonson and Pope use reality as lifeless matter, and the literature which they produce is static rather than dynamic. They lack the vision or imagination which can pierce through the conventions, habits, fears and desires which hide the true essence of things of human experiences. But imagination, on the other hand, does not mean day-dreaming, which provides an escape from real life. The great writers do not lose touch with their surrounding and become oblivious of the solid earth on which they live. Imagination is the magic force which, starting from appearances, can recapture the inner structure or music of a thing or experience and embody it into a work of art. Imagination seems to soar above the real or beyond the real in the same way as the branches of a tree soar above the earth ; the tree can no more leave the earth than imagination can detach itself completely from reality, for in this case the result would be death. To be free, and yet not to lose touch with reality, that is the characteristic of a true artist or poet.

Taking into account these considerations, we come to the conclusion that literature has deep affiliations with life. All great pieces of literature are "true to life." Walter Pater says, "The work of great poets is not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble deeds; but to withdraw the thoughts for a little while from the mere machinery of life, to fix them, with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects." The great books, therefore, are not "a mighty bloodless substitutes for life" ; they are as vital and living as life itself, and, in fact, more interesting and intense than what life appears to ordinary people. When we read great literature we come in contact with life as its best and interesting moments, and know more about life through books than our wayward and disjointed experiences.

2

Functions of Literature

The word 'literature' yields itself to many interpretations. Let us scrutinize these interpretations with heuristic eyes. so that we may be able to understand its functions. According to Lord Morley, literature consists of all the books where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity and attraction of form. Literature is, Emerson says, a record of the best thoughts of mighty minds. According to the famous phrase of Matthew Arnold, "literature is the criticism of life". Dr. Johnson says that literature is a kind of intellectual light which, like the light of the sun, may sometimes enable us to see in life what we are prone to neglect. All these definitions are sufficient to substantiate the fact that literature is intimately related to life. Literature is a representative of life. Men of letters who are endowed with sensitive minds, observe "multi-facet" life and render their observations and impressions in the form of art.

Man exists in relation to society : a combination, or more truly the result of a chemical combination of individuals. Let me explain this fact in a crude and incondite manner. Strong relations exist between man and society. Dr. Iqbal impresses upon us the significance of these relations when he says :

> *"To an individual, attachment to a group is blessing ;*
> *His potential worth attains perfection from the group.*
> *The lone individual is ignorant of objectives ;*
> *His strength is prone to disintegration."*

Man's gregarious nature does not force him to exist in relation to society ; he has to adopt this course because he needs the co-operation of society to maintain his entity. But the structure of society is complicated, so much so that man can't apprehend it. He must be assisted to develop the intellectual and emotional capacities for a socially useful life. He needs "autopsy." He needs to work out feasible affinities with other people. Moreover, he must achieve

some inner centre from which to view in perspective the versatile society about him. The individual seeks to enter into another's experience, to glimpse beauty and reality that the world offers, to fathom the resources of human spirit, to gain understanding that will make his own ideas more lucid and intelligible, to find moulds into which to pour his own seemingly—or actually—chaotic experiences. Literature helps us in achieving this end. No matter what the form——poem, novel, drama, essay——literature makes alive and comprehensible to us the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities that life offers. Literature has but one function : it elevates our mind and deepens our heart. In other words, literature heightens our awareness of human life. It enables us to look at life with new eyes. Bacon is right, when he bides us to read not to contradict and refute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and to consider. The literary student is one who through books explores the strange voyages of man's moral reason, the impluses of human heart, and the shifting fortunes of great conceptions of truth and virtue. The object of reading is not to dip into everything that wise men have ever written ; but, according to Cardinal Newman, the object of literature is to open the mind, to refine it, to enable it, to comprehend and digest its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties.

According to De Quincy, "there is first the literature of knowledge, and secondly, the literature of power. The function of the first is to teach, the function of the second is to move. Literature of knowledge speaks to the discursive understanding of man. Literature of power appeals to the higher understanding of reason through affections of pleasure and sympathy. But his opinion is vulnerable. De Quincy's dichotomy gives no place in the map of literature to books which "move" as well as "teach". Sidney maintains the supremacy of poetry over philosophy and history simply because poetry moves as well as teaches. As a matter of fact, knowledge and power are often found fused and dove-tailed. So De Quincy's sharp division does not appeal to us. There can be no water-tight compartment of "Literature of Knowledge", and "Literature of Power". Literature has a double aspect, one is knowledge, the other is power.

Literature incites us towards "acceptance of life". To see the painting with both of its shades, black and white. Moreover to realize that it is only the contrast of the two colours, that makes the pointing stand. On account of the light which the artist sheds on the intricate problems and obscure aspects of human life, he enlarges the personality of the reader and heightens his consciousness. The artist not only sheds light on the intricate problems and obscure aspects of life, but he presents life in a more organized form. Life, as we see it, is highly chaotic and disorderly. It is difficult to comprehend it. The result is that we are confused. Now it is the artist who presents life to us in such a manner as to eliminate what is unessential, unrelated, inorganic. He gives us a picture of life as a whole

of which all the parts are seen to be co-operative. Literature does what life does not, and which we can't do ourselves, *i. e.*, to eliminate the unessential. It is the poet who discovers the true connection of things; his picture of things is a criticism of life. Longinus says that 'sublime literature' lifts us out of ourselves. Shelley puts the same idea in his famous phrase. "The peculiar function of poety is that it makes familair objects to be as though they were not familiar." It is through this peculiarity that the poet redeems us out of all that seems not to matter into a world which is vital, organic and pulsating.

Plato condemned poetry as 'an imitation of an imitation". But he failed to assess the true worth of a poet. The poet differs from all other men, firstly, because he has a more lively sensibility, and secondly, because he has been, from whatever cause, better able to save his sensibility from the contamination of reason or the infection of custom. The result is that he sees things not as they are but as they matter. Through imagination, the poet looks deeper into the reality of things and finds the truth about them. When we read "sublime literature", we become aware of those deeper truths about life, which are ignored by us when engaged in our day-to-day problems. We live a life which is narrow. Literature offers us an escape into life which is grand and extensive. Literature, therefore, is not an escape from life, as some critics have put it, but an escape into life.

Artist is the discoverer and declarer of the perennial beneath the deciduous. In other words, the artist is one who can best see and best say what is ideal——what belongs to the world of soul and beauty. A great artist is an interpreter between man and nature. It is he who gives us those key-words, the possession of which makes us masters of all the unsuspected treasure-caverns of thought and feeling, and beauty which open under the dusty-path of our daily-life. Life becomes to us a sooty task master, and we crawl through dark passage without end——till suddenly the word of some artist redeems us, makes as know who we are. "Wretched is the man", says Goethe, "who has learned to despise the dreams of his youth." It is from this misery, that the artist rescues us.

Literature is a cultural heritage which one generation gives to the other. Literature of every nation is the outcome of mental efforts of centuries. A writer does not create literature merely to entertain his readers. There are certain motives behind his creations. Many burning questions keep on disturbing his mind even for years and literature is the answer to these questions. A writer tries to inculcate best visions in the minds of his readers. We observe in our daily life that every sensible person is influenced by a particular poet, dramatist or novelist and that particular writer is always appreciated by him. That writer, if he is a true artist, gives a new orientation to his emotions and thoughts. Revolution in ideas

brings revolution in actual life. If there had not been revolutionary writers in France, there would never have been a revolution. Because all the human actions are, consciously or unconsciously, subordinate to mind and if a writer inculcates good and healthy ideas in minds, the persons will automatically do good deeds. Literature gives us an awakening mind and not a sleeping one. Real literature represents dynamic life, the like in which the society is completely aware of its soul and environment.

Stalin once called writers 'the engineers of human souls.' Inspired language helps readers to develop a humane and liberal outlook towards life, to understand the world they live in, understand themselves and plan sensibly for their future. Literature is a sacred instrument and through its use, we can combat the forces of ignorance and prejudice. Literature performs the divine function of intensifying our consciousness of human unity, of giving scope and meaning to our scattered experiences and of making life more beautiful by pointing out its harmony in its diversity.

In conclusion, literature is the brain of humanity. Just as in the individual, the brain preserves the record of his previous situations, of his experiences, and of his acquired knowledge, and it is in the light of this record that he interprets every fresh sensation and experience ; so the race at large has a record of its past in literature, and it is in the light of past-record alone that its present conditions and circumstances can be understood. The message of the senses is indistinct and valueless to the individual without the co-operation of the brain ; the life of the race would be degraded to a mere animal-existence without the accumulated stores of previous experiences which literature places at its disposal.

3 Literature and Society

Literature is intimately related to society. Viewed as a whole, a body of literature is the part of the entire culture of the people. Its themes and problems emerge from the group activities and group situations, and its significance lies in the extent to which it expresses and enriches the totality of culture. As a matter of fact, literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation.

Society influences literature in many ways, and the connections of literature with society are integral and pervasive. In fact the range of social influences on literature is as broad as the entire range of operative social forces : the prevailing system of social organisations—including class structure, the economic system, the dominent ideas, the political organisation and the deep-rooted social institutions. There is nothing in the compass of social life that does not play its part—small or large, directly or indirectly—in giving literature the impress of the surrounding world.

The relation between literature and society is highly complex, and it is very difficult to determine which element of society has exerted which influence on literature. We cannot, therefore, afford to isolate a single element in society—whether economic or ideological—and assign to it a causal role in the final determination of literature. The whole of social progress—including material, philosophical, economic and industrial elements—may be regarded as containing the potential influences determining the direction and character of literature of a period. In each period in the history of nations, a certain social situation is brought into the area of operative influence, which is different from another social situation. The writer of that period selects those elements of that social situation which have managed to produce an impact on him, and weaves them into a pattern which is compatible with his own standards and his own view of human life.

Some critics believe in the direct connection between literature and the social situation or the 'Spirit of the Age.' They tell their

readers that literature is the finest expression of contemporary feelings. Those who understand literature can learn most from the thought of the period. Man's attitude to things, his ethical valuations and his emotional preferences are carried over into the direct, expression in the literary productions. Literature is a sort of seismograph that registers the slightest deviations from an existing intellectual point of rest. Such is their theory. They hold that in literature the spirit of the Age gains embodiment and shape, and that a man of truly sensitive perception can deduce the whole intellectual life of a period from its literature, as some natural healers profess to read the whole state of the body in the eyes.

Such criticism of literature as this is, of course, no more than an exaggeration of a fundamentally correct idea. The fact is that any appreciable change in the social process communicates itself to the body of literature not directly but through a complicated network of social relations. There is every chance that its force may be multiplied or deflected in the devious process of transmission, or that its influence will be complicated, distorted or nullified by some other change arising elsewhere in the social process. Thus the social situation influences literature in a manner which is not so obvious and simple as some critics believe it to be.

Some critics are of the opinion that literature has no relation with the social situation prevailing at a particular time. For example, Vossler, writing about Dante remarked : "Science and fine arts may require a rich economic social. But imaginative literature is a flower that flourish as merrily among rocks and ice, in frost and stooms. It is affected by the history of states and wars only in so far as they fill the imagination, and appeal to the emotions of the people." Renan, another critic, goes even further when he shows that the periods of great political and social storms and upheavals are just those that give life to great and fruitful new ideas. Among the many examples he quotes in evidence of his contention, he points out that it was exactly in the time and partly under the yoke of Napoleon that Germany passed through her classical period of philosophy and art.

But the history of literature regarded in its sociological aspect, teaches us to view generalisation of this sort with certain mistrust. Certain popular forms of literature may be independent of material circumstances, but it is not so in the case of great literature. Literary creations spring from the sociological soil. Henry Bamford Parkers says : "Every writer grows up as a member of a particular society, and the structure of his personality, his view of life and his emotional conflicts and communications are conditioned by social factors. He is likely, moreover, to be generally receptive to those broad currents of thoughts and feelings which are shared by the other members of society. For this reason the content of his work cannot be explained without reference to his social background.

In revealing himself the writer also reflects his society." So literature and society are interwoven internally and externally. Let us study the various poets, schools and movements which confirm this contention.

Chaucer is the representative poet of the fourteenth century. His 'Canterbury Tales' reveals the political, economic and social conditions of the time. This poem has the true colour and aroma of the fourteenth-century England. In fact, Chaucer is a realist and holds the mirror up to the life of his time.

Spenser is considered as the child of the Renaissance and Reformation. The Renaissance marked the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern world. In addition to external far-reaching changes, it brought spiritual and mental rebirth. Born in the lap of Renaissance, Spenser's mental-make-up is infused with the new spirit. Because of the influence of the new learning, he draws quite freely upon the treatment of classical poet such as Homer, Virgil, Claudius and Ovid. But what he borrows, he elaborates in his own way. There is Platonic love described in each book of "The Fearie Queene." Being the product of his age, Spenser is not lacking in the defects of the Renaissance. The age has certain literary drawbacks, such as exaggeration, diffuseness and prolixity. '*The Faerie Queene*' is also diffusive and prolix. Briefly speaking, Spenser is profoundly influenced by the Renaissance.

The Renaissance spirit manifests itself in the works of Bacon and Marlowe and Shakespeare.

Ben Jonson has remarked about Shakespeare: "He is not of an age, but for all time." Despite the touch of universality, Shakespeare is not immune from the influence of his age. The people of his age were superstitious; they believed in witches and ghosts. Shakespeare feels himself constrained to introduce supernatural elements in his plays to cater to the taste of the masses. Humanism, the hall-mark of the Renaissance, also appears in his dramas. Although Shakespeare is the child of his age, yet his plays have the perennial interest which will be remembered from generation to generation.

The seventeenth century up to 1660 was dominated by Puritanism. The Puritan movement stood for liberty of people from the shackles of the despotic rulers as well as the introduction of morality and high ideals in politics. Thus it had two objects — personal righteousness and civil and religious liberty. Milton, the great poet, is the noblest and indomitable representative of the Puritan spirit to which he gives a most lofty and enduring expression in his writings.

Pope is a great poet of the eighteenth century. His poetry is a remarkably clear and adequate reflection of the spirit of the age in which he lived. "*The Rape of the Lock*" is one of the greatest

mock-heroic poems; it presents the peculiarities and frivolities of the society in a witty and satirical manner.

The French Revolution brought to Europe the hope of political freedom and social reconstruction. Wordsworth was deeply moved by the dogmas of the French Revolution. '*The Prelude*' analyses as well as communicates the progress of Wordsworth's political sympathies. Wordsworth records the feelings of those days :

"Bliss was it in these days to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven."

Byron also raised the slogan of revolution against old social conventions. He excels the other poets of England in his being one of the supreme poets of revolution and liberty. Similarly, the poety of Shelley is saturated with the spirit of revolution.

Tennyson is the representative poet of the Victorian Age. His works reflect the tendencies, the aspirations and the problems that agitated the minds of the men of his age. Briefly speaking, Tennyson's poetry is an epitome of his times.

T.S. Eliot is a modern poet in the real sense of the word. His poetry expresses the boredom, defeatism and frustration of the modern age. 'The Waste Land' is an extremely moving but extremely depressing poem. It reveals the barrenness of England as it appears today. A historical knowledge of literature is almost indispensable for a complete appreciations of the poem. Eliot's poetry gives way to a mood of terror in face of an outworn civilization, a terror deeply felt, even when hidden beneath the surface of irony of his poems.

From this rapid survey of English literature from the Renaissance period to the modern times, it becomes clear that literature is a reflection of the changes which take place in society. With the changes in the social, economic, political and religious life of a nation, its literature also changes. Literature is not static but dynamic. The currents of life and literature run almost parallel. The writers of every age are influenced by the prevailing social pattern.

But social aspect of literature is not the only thing to be considered. Literature has something more. It has certain values and traits which make it immortal and everlasting. It is the deep-rooted spirit of the literary genius which makes his work last for all ages and times. The individuality of the writer can transcend the age and reveal the eternal truth of human nature.

4

Literature and Science

Literature or art, and science are two fundamental and fundamentally different activities of human mind. Man is a complex creature. Science was born from the insatiable curiosity of his intellect.

To measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite ;

and science has flourished exceedingly. But a man is also a poetical animal, and it has been wisely said that 'a savant who is not also a poet in soul and a religionist at heart is a feable and unhappy creature." On the balanced development of both sides of his nature depends his worth as an individual ; in their just fusion as motive forces in society lies the measure of human progress.

Literature and science, though fundamentally different activities of the human mind, have not been at daggers drawn with each other. The two activities, the scientific and the literary, have always gone side by side and each has been influenced by the other. It is not that literature has moved in an isolated grove of sensibility, untouched and unaffected by the scientific progress of the times ; nor is it that science has not been coloured by the poetic vision of great seers and poets. There has always been a close relationship between science and literature and each has exercised a potent influence on the other. It is not that the scientists have not been men of letters, and literary men not scientists. There have been poets deeply interested in science and there have been scientists who have been deeply influenced by poetry. Scientists as well as literary artists have always realized that an exclusively scientific training will bring about a mental twist as surely as will an exclusively literary training.

In England, the scientific spirit, which was heralded in Europe by Copernicus, spread in the seventeenth century. But it is significant to note that the prophet of the movement was a great man of letters, Francis Bacon. Science was the master passion of Bacon's life ; he saw within man's grasp a vast unexplored kingdom of knowledge,

"if only he will be humble enough and patient enough and truthful enough to occupy it," and he constituted himself as its champion. It was mainly due to his eloquenes that matters which had otherwise been the concern of specialists became the common interest of educated men. Bacon, in fact, created for science an intellectual atmosphere. His essays demonstrate the influence of science on literary writing. They are argumentative, balanced, the reasoning of an impartial mind.

The widespread interest which Bacon took in science began to have its repercussions in the world of literature. Donne was the first outstanding creative writer to be disturbed by the new learning in science. Science leads him to scepticism — the faith that soul on earth cannot possess itself of full knowledge :

"And new philosophy calls all in doubt
The element of fire is quite put out ;
The Sun is lost : and th' earth and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it."

Donne's imagery comes from the new knowledge of geography, astronomy and physics.

In 1662, the Royal Society came into being with the help of a small group of scientists. But in conception the Society owed much to the suggestions contained in the writings of literary men as Bacon and Cowley. The Royal Society insisted on the rational view of the world, and its influence gradually permeated both literature and society. It affected the style of literature no less than its general temper and subject-matter. Prose now became an adequate instrument of clear thinking and commonsense, a fitting vehicle of history and biography, for essay and novel.

In the eighteenth century, the relation between science and literature presents an interesting spectacle. Some men of letters ceased to take a serious view of science, and started ridiculing it. Pope,the prince among satirists, scientists in his "Dunciad". Among the first to receive a degree from the Goddess of Dullness, are those who "Shine in the dignity of F.R.S." Swift's satire is even more scathing. When Gulliver visits the college of Lagado, he meets one professor who has striven for eight years to extract sunbeams from cucumbers, and another devising a plan for building a house from the roof-downwards.

During the period of Romanticism, science failed to receive the favour of the poets. Wordsworth, the great poet of Nature and Spiritual life, opposes the advance of science and the insistence of science on rational inquiry, critical survey and cold-blooded analysis. According to him, the scientist "murders to dissect", and the way of appreciating nature is not the way adopted by the scientists. Keats, distrusts science as it destroys the beauty of lovely objects.

Shelley's relation to science is particularly puzzling. He possesses an enormous capacity for myth-making ; he has, at the same time, a deep knowledge of science. But it must be noted that it is science which leads him to the discovery of a new mythology for the expression of his view of the universe. He has transfigured Godwin's perfectability into the myth of "*Prometheus Unbound*." He uses images which are charged with multiple significance, that is political, philosophical and scientific, apart from the traditional poetic one.

The Victorian literature was considerably influenced by the conflict between the old theological traditions and the advance of new science as Darwin had enunciated in the "*Origin of Species.*" The thinkers and poets of the Victorian era were impelled to reconsider the foundations of their belief. This very conflict gave birth to much of the poetry of the Victorian period. Matthew Arnold has very nicely expressed this conflict between science and theology in the following lines ;

The sea of Faith,
Was once too at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd :
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
Any naked shingles of the world.

Tennyson wavers in his faith and yet tries to stick to that faith. The conflict between faith and knowledge is expressed by him in the following lines from "In Memoriam :"

"There remains more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me then in half the creeds."

Science has exerted a profound influence on the twentieth century literature. The influence of science is felt in every genre of literature ——poetry, novel, criticism. The works of T.S. Eliot have particularly been affected by the spirit of science. In a world of disillusionment brought about by the forces of science, the poet sees the world as a *Waste Land* peopled by hollow men.

H. G. Wells has undoubtedly rendered great service to modern literature by showing the way in which the subject of science should be treated by artists. Bertrand Russell is the typical writer of the twentieth century ; his experience and theme bear a very strong stamp of the scientific and modern philosophic knowledge.

The most significant influence of science on literature is demonstrated by the modern trends in literary criticism. I. A. Richards has propounded a psychological theory of value because of the influence of science. "*Principles of Literary Criticism*" reveals his views on psychology, philosophy and scientific method. Shelley used Platonism to remove Plato's objections to poets; similarly Richards wishes to use science to remove the scientist's objections. He calls his book an instrument for thinking with scientific vigour. His pupil, William Empson, has extended the application of the method much further with the publication of his two well-renowned books, "*Seven Types of Ambiguity*", and "*Structure of Words*." Freudian psychology has also provided the critic with an appropriate method for discovering the meaning of a literary piece, for understanding the temperament of an artist and also for analysing the creative process itself. Maud Bodkin's "*Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*" is an illuminating contribution inspired by psychology.

5 Romanticism and Classicism

Classicism and Romanticism are "thought confounding" words. According to some critics, like Goethe, "Classicism is health ; Romanticism is disease". On the other hand, enthusiasts, like young Stendhall, are of opinion that "all good art is romantic."

In general criticism, the terms classicism and romanticism stand for two opposite tendencies. The distinctive symptoms of classicism are : belief in reason, emphasis on the civilized, modern and sophisticated modes of life, interest in urban society, preoccupation with human nature, realistic recognition of things as they are, impersonal objectivity, interest in public themes, emphasis on formal correctness and the ideal of order, use of formal poetic diction.

The symptoms of romanticism, on the other hand, are : belief in feelings, imagination and intuition, emphasis on the primitive, medieval and natural modes of life, preoccupation with the aesthetic and spiritual values of external nature, love for visions of the mysterious, the ideal and the infinite, tendency of myth-making, subjectivism, interest in private themes, emphasis on individual expressiveness.

Classical poetry, so to speak, is "all there". Its meaning is all on its surface; it conveys nothing but what it says, and what it says, it says completely. It is always vigorous, direct, often pointed and aphoristic, never merely suggestive, never given to half-statement, and never obscure. The great Romantics go to work in other ways. Their poetry is a thing of half-lights and half-spoken suggestions, of hints that imagination will piece together, of words that are charged with an added meaning of sound over sense, a thing that stirs the vague and impalpable restlessness of memory. It rouses what a philosopher has called the "Transcendental Feeling."

Critics have analysed romanticism from individual standpoints. Pater, Dunton and others insist upon an element of wonder and strangeness being its essence. Another group of critics——Herford for example——look upon romanticism as "an extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility." A third group of critics represent romanticism as a spirit of revolt.

An essential condition of classical art and literature is a balance of matter and form, a certain high degree of worth in both. Brunetiere has remarked : "A classic is a classic because in his work all the faculties find their legitimate function——without imagination overstepping reason, without logic impeding the flight of imagination, without sentiment encroaching on the rights of good sense, without good sense killing the warmth of sentiment, without the matter allowing itself to be despoiled of the persuasive authority it should borrow from the charm of form, and without the form ever usurping an interest which should belong only to the matter."

According to Scott-James, the classic tends to emphasise the this-worldliness of the beauty that we know, while the romantic stresses its other-worldliness. For the first, the proper study of mankind is man, while the second looks for it in strange and unknown places and in the wilder scenes of Nature. Repose satisfies the classic; and adventure attracts the Romantic. The one appeals to tradition, the other demands the new. Classicism tends to order, lucidity and proportion, Romanticism to freedom, to fancy, to caprice. They represent the old contrast between lovers of principle of liberty and strength, on the one hand, and those of the principles of authority and order, on the other.

F. L. Lucas relates literature and literary tendencies to the three psychological divisions of Id, Ego, Super-Ego. Realism in literature corresponds to a dominance of Ego, classicism very roughly to Super-Ego; Romanticism results from a dominance of impulses from the Id.

T. S. Eliot points out that the contrast between the two terms 'Romantic' and 'Classic' is the contrast between the complete and the fragmentary, the adult and the immature, the orderly and the chaotic. Whereas romanticism is the fragmentary, immature and chaotic, classicism is the complete and the orderly. Eliot's views do not seem sound because it is rather difficult to understand in what sense Adonais, Ode to Nightingale and The Skylark are fragmentary and chaotic. In fact, they are master-pieces of maturity. Eliot has expressed the greatness of classicism. A classic can only occur when a civilization is mature.

According to Pater, the essential element of classicism is the quality of order in beauty, whereas that of romanticism it is addition of strangeness to beauty. These two tendencies are always at work in any work of art, and they become distinct only when one is exaggerated.

These two trends, romanticism and classicism, can be reconciled. This reconciliation is not far-fetched but plausible; the distinction between the classic and the Romantic is only a relative and not an absolute one. True art is a blending of both the elements or trends ; the

two tendencies are complementary; and when they are combined in perfect proportion, they produce the highest imaginative art. The two elements are united in perfect art, in Sophocles, in Dante, in Goethe and in the highest works of Shakespeare. Classical and Romantic —— these are systole and diastole of the human heart in history. They represent, on one hand, our need of order, of synthesis, of a comprehensive yet definite ordering of thought and feeling and action, and, on the other hand, the inevitable infiniteness of every human synthesis, the inevitable discovery that our spiritual aspirations are being starved, or that our secular impulses are "cribbed, cabine'd and confined."

6 Literature and the Writer's Personality

Regarding the relation of the writer to his work and how far it is the expression of his personality, there are two opposite views—the Objective and the Subjective, or the Impersonal and Personal. Now let us examine these views in detail.

Wordsworth believes in the personal view of art. He says : "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...... by a man...... who has also thought long and deeply. Our thoughts are the representatives of all our past feelings." This leads to the famous saying that "Poetry takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity."

Goethe says : "The style of a writer is a true impression of his inner self : if any one would write a clear style, let him claim that he has a great character." It is the personal character of the writer that brings his meaning before his readers, not the artifices of his talent. The artist must work from within outwards.

Matthew Arnold has remarked : "In literature we come into immediate contact with the genius itself ..... The language is formed to convey not the object alone, but likewise the character, mood and intentions of the person who is representing it."

Walter Pater has written in his essay on Style : "Truth—there can be no merit, no craft at all without that. And further, all beauty is in the long run only fineness of truth, and what we call expression is the finer accommodation of truth to that vision within."

All these quotations express the personal or the subjective view of art. They emphasise four points. First, that in art there is no beauty but truth of expression, fidelity to the personal vision. Second, that the basis of great literature is originally and typically the recollection of personal experience. Third, that the perfect expression of our intuitions can only be achieved by a free personality, never by external means such as artifice of form or diction. Fourth, that

the reason of this lies in the nature of language, which in literature is necessarily dyed with the personality of the writer.

Now let us consider the impersonal view of art, of which Gustav Flaubert, a great French writer, is the champion. In one of his letters he states : "Great poets are not preoccupied with themselves or their own passions ; they put their own personality into the background in order to absorb themselves in the personalities of others." In another letter Flaubert states : "Nothing is more feeble than to put our personal feelings into a work of art."

In another letter Flaubert has remarked : "The dramatic form has this in its favour, that it wipes out the author. The author should be in his work as God in the Universe, present everywhere, visible nowhere."

The impersonal attitude of the writer is termed by Keats as Negative Capability, which means that he (the writer) has no personality at all, and therefore, he identifies himself with all sorts of persons and things. Keats condemns poets who cannot forget themselves in their writings, and whose personality obtrudes too much in their works. It is on account of Wordsworth's emphasis on his emotions and thoughts that Keats contemptuously call him the "Egoistically Sublime." Comparing himself with Byron, Keats has remarked : "Byron writes what he feels ; I write what I imagine ; mine is the harder task."

Another great modern critic and poet who is opposed to the personal theory of art is T. S. Eliot. He believes that art is not the expression of the personality of the artist, but of the tradition which he inherits from the past. In his essay "*Tradition and Individual Talent*" he states : "It is not on account of the personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones, and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all ......Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion ; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotion know what it means to escape from these things."

There is much sense in the views expressed by Flaubert and T. S. Eliot. But it cannot be ruled out that all art flows from the personality of the artist, and it bears an unmistakable stamp of his personality. If Shakespeare has a wide and more comprehensive vision of life than other poets and if he treats it more tolerantly, that is only to say that he has a different and more intense personality.

Complete objectivity is an illusion and self-contradiction when applied to art. The building up of any pattern, historical or artistic, the progressive illumination of a theme, can only take place according to certain process of selectivity which unavoidably bears the imprint of an individual vision and personality. Shakespeare and other famous writers have borrowed without qualms and shame plots and scenes and passages from their predecessors or contemporaries, but they have borrowed in order to make them their own, and their works are not reproduction or imitations of other works, but bear the unmistakable imprint of their own genius.

Milton has rightly remarked : "A good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." Pater insists that the critic should look for the "expressive" thing in a work of art, that which expresses the essential personality of an author——the peculiar quality of power and meaning which is the gist of him, distinguishing him from every thing else that ever was. This peculiar quality, or the expressive thing in an author, manifests itself in thought or sentiment, and in style ; and, according to Pater, thought or sentiment and style are one and the same thing.

That the personality of the artist cannot but be reflected in his work, cannot be denied. The more skilfully the artist concentrates himself upon his art, the more surely will all that he produces be dyed with the colour of his own vision. It must, however, be admitted that the writer should not clog his art with the dust of trivial affairs, or the affairs of mere ego. Artistic greatness is measured by the degree of impersonality, which is also universality. Great poets work most of the time at that level. Shakespeare's plays convey to us aspects of the truth which, although it bears the mark of Shakespearian prism though which it has passed, has universal value because it has the very essence of Shakespeare himself ; and at the level of essence, Shakespeare's genius is both one man and all men, in time and out of time.

The impersonal art is superior to merely personal art. The maturity of the artist depends on the degree of objectivity he has achieved. An impersonal, objective art stands free from subjective stresses. There the writer frees himself from the demands of family, country and religion in order to become the true artist. The objective vision of one's experience is not a mere passive contemplation but a positive act. The act frees him negatively : from the darkness of ignorance, from his former subjection to forces he did not understand. Again, that act frees positively : permits the will to act in the future, to determine the self more fully and more surely. The artistic attitude is so complex that it demands the most specific and searching image of reality for its expression ; and the artist in his maturity becomes an impersonally sensitive catalyst

of the spiritual and mental conditions of his society and age. As Coleridge has pointed out : "The impersonal, superior power works in an unobtrusive manner during the creative process on the material which has been "so accurately and profoundly contemplated" by the energetic fervour of the artist's own spirit."

Art is both personal expression or projection and the impersonal, objective articulation of external reality. Subject and object are united in the written word. "In every work of art, there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal." Therefore we have to admit that the personality of the artist is the basis of his art and it plays a significant role in all his creative work, however objective or impersonal it may be.

Walter Pater
Allen Edgar Poe
Art for art's sake
Art for morality sake

7 Art and Morality

The relation between art and morality has always been a matter of philosophic speculation and intellectual discussion. There are two schools of thought, holding opposite views about the function of literature or art in general. The view of the moralists is that the writer can, and inevitably does, influence the lives and characters of his readers ; and therefore try to be a good influence. For them art is food or poison. The view of the aesthetes, or those who give more importance to pleasure, is that the writer cannot influence his readers, or alternatively, that he can, but must never try. For them art is wine. Only its pleasure-value matters.

The Greeks believed in the moralistic view of art. According to Plato, Aeschylus, Euripides and Aristophanes, the real purpose of art is to inculcate moral value. Art is to be tolerated only if it serves the cause of morality and virtue. Plato is particularly hostile to art devoted to mere beauty and sensual charms, and he has no place for painters and poets in his '*Republic*'. His objections can be summarized as under :

(*a*) Art indulges in violent emotions which result in violence and chaos among its adherents.

(*b*) It is a superficial human activity because the artist imitates something which is itself an imitation.

Aristotle does not concur with Plato on these points. To him, the purpose of tragedy is "to arouse the feelings of pity and fear and effect a catharsis of these emotions." He feels that by a regular purgation of these feelings, a general improvement will take place in the moral sensibilities of the audience so conditioned. In other words, the purpose of art is moral, and this very purpose becomes its chief justification in the face of the damaging attacks made by Plato.

Sidney's "*Apologie for Poetrie*" is an eulogy. Philosophy, history and ethics are all summoned and dismissed only to make room for poetry, because it (poetry) is an effective and powerful medium of impressing man, ethically and morally. Sidney has

provided a moral justification for the existence of poetry. Milton has employed the art of poetry for moral preaching. The aim of his poetry is "to justify the ways of God to man". Dr. Johnson believes that "poetry must be, as a rule, didactic." He is hard upon Shakespeare because he "seems to write without any moral purpose."

Among the Romantic poets, Wordsworth upholds the moralistic view of art, and insists that a poet should propagate the moral and spiritual values of life. He says : "I am nothing if not a teacher." For Shelley, poetry has a moral effect, without recommending any specific morality. Matthew Arnold, the renowned critic of the Victorian era, has interpreted literature in terms of moral values. He says : "A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life ; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life."

Ruskin is the man who forcefully and vigorously advocates the moralist view of art. Ruskin may be compared with Plato, because 'art and morality' is a problem for both of them, and both are on the side of the moralist. But there are profound differences between the two minds. "Plato concluded that from their very nature arts conflicted with morality, and therefore, he banished them from his state. Ruskin found that from their very nature they coincided with morality, and he gave them his blessing. Plato condemned the arts because they were immoral ; Ruskin praised them because they were superbly moral. The one drove them from the city because they were founded in the delusions of sense, the other welcomed them because they sprange from the divine intelligence operating through the imagination of man." Ruskin is of opinion that good people alone create good art and that the excellence of a work is to be judged according to the goodness and nobility of the artist who has created it.

Bernard Shaw has strongly emphasised the moral view of art. He declared : "I can't write any play for the mere glorification of art." Galsworthy, too, in spite of his adoration of art, has made his dramas and novels instrument for bringing about moral reforms in human society. H. G. Wells says that the writer should class himself not with the artists, but with the teachers, the priests and the prophets."

Another critic of twentieth century, E. E. Kellet has maintained in his book "Fashion in Literature" that the cry, 'art for art's sake' is no more than a witless attempt to separate literature from experience and value.

Tolstoy has also laid stress on the moral aspect of art. According to him, art is not to be valued by its beauty or its aesthetic pleasure. Like food it must be judged by its effect, not on the

palate, but on the health. Moreover, the value of art must depend on the value of emotions it transmits ; and the value of emotions transmitted is decided by the attitude to life they embody. Art is in dispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and humanity.

It is rather very strange that the twentieth century, often marked for its lax morality, has produced critics who are never tired of saying into our ears that poetry should be judged only by ethical standards. T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis and I. A. Richards form a group known as "moralists." Each one of them upholds the view that moralistic and artistic values are correlative in any work of art.

Now let us consider the second view *i. e.*, Art for Art's Sake. This view has its origin in France, and it has been attributed to Victor Cousin. But its chief champion is Gautier. He says : "A town interests me merely for its buildings. Let the inhabitants be utterly vile, and the town a haunt of crime; what does that signify to me so long as I am not assassinated while looking at the buildings." Flaubert, the great tragic writer of France, remarks, "No great poet has ever drawn conclusion. According to a French critic : "To admire art because it can uplift the individual is like admiring the rose because we extract from it a medicine for the eye." Renan, another French critic, is influenced by the same desire to separate art from any rough contact with practical life.

In England, the theory of Art for Art's Sake did not move so fast or so far as in France, though it went quite far enough. It was started by Swinburne, but the most important figure was Walter Pater who could claim to be the major prophet of English Aestheticism. His attention is always focussed on form rather than on subject-matter. He says : "The work of great poets is not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble deeds. To treat life in the spirit of art is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified."

Pater's heir was Oscar Wilde who went a good deal further. He says : "There is no such thing as moral or immoral books. Books are well written or badly written ; that is all. No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy is an unpardonable mannerism." Keats is reported to have remarked, "We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us."

It is expedient to point out that Dryden, the first English critic, is also in sympathy with the concept of Art for Art's Sake. His contention is that poetry's first and foremost aim is to give pleasure. He says : "Delight is the chief, if not the only, end of poetry; instruction can be admitted but in second place, for poetry only instructs as it delights."

The moralistic and aesthetic views of art are diametrically opposed to each other. If we look at this problem dispassionately, and weigh the arguments on both sides, we find that there is an element of

exaggeration in each of them; they convey one aspect of truth, not the whole truth. The main purpose of literature is to give aesthetic pleasure, but it is wrong to say that literature should be a moral or anti-moral. On the other hand, the business of the literary artist is not to teach, but to exhibit. Morality is not in conflict with art ——— it only seeks to bring about a harmony between art and other great values. The artist is a creator, a revealer and an exhibitor. He does not force the reader to a particular dogma. He simply conveys the deepest ideas of humanity and clarifies the lessons of life. It is up to the reader to draw conclusions from a work of art. Morality being one of the principal issues in life belongs to the very fibre and texture of life. Art cannot be wholly the hand-maiden of morality, nor can it be completely divorced from morality. The artist can never be, by the nature of things, so independent of the mass of mankind as to make artistic excellence his sole objective ; on the other hand moral worth, however distinctive, can never of itself suffice to endow his work with characteristic charm of art.

8 Satire in English Literature

Satire is a negative kind of art. Middleton Murray has very aptly remarked : "Satire implies the condemnation of society by reference to an ideal." The satirist is destructive ; he destroys what is already there, and does not necessarily offer to fill the vacuum that he has created. The two essential elements of literary satire are criticism of the ridiculous or the disgusting, and humour. The satirist is a censor with an eye for the ludicrous. His art is an exercise of the intellect rather than of the imagination. The persistent association of satire with malice is a false one. The writer who ridicules is not inevitably a misanthrope ; he does not necessarily work, as Meredith asserts, "on a storage of bile" Satire may arise out of spite, but equally it may arise from an appreciation that man might be, but is not, like an angel.

The main difficulty is to distinguish the satirical from the comic. The writer of comedy is usually dealing with the same sort of materials as the writer of satire. Like the satirist, he is very much alive to the follies and imperfections and faults of men and women ; he sees us falling short in one way or the other of the standards to which he himself consciously or unconsciously subscribes. But all this he does, as Wordsworth said of the old farmer of Tilsbury Vale, 'in the ease of his heart.' Though he judges what he sees and hears, he has no great desire to pass judgment, and still less to strip bare and victimise the intellectual and moral imbeciles he has observed. It is, on the contrary, the mark of the satirist that he can't accept and refuses to tolerate. Confronted with the same human shortcomings as the writer of comedy (and with others more serious) he is driven to protest. For him those are not matters for pure contemplation ; they must be exposed, held up to derision or made to look as hideous as he believes them to be. The motives that lead to satire are varied, but there is one motive that may almost be called a constant : the satirist is nearly always a man who is abnormally sensitive to the gap between what might be and what is. Just as some people feel a sort of compulsion, when they see a picture hanging crooked, to walk up to it and straighten it, so the satirist feels driven to draw attention to any departure from what he believes to be the truth, or honesty, or justice.

The satirist is concerned with sickness, and his business is to administer a purge—or to use the knife. But the patient may be troublesome, for he has not, indeed, recognised that he is sick. Either the purge must be made palatable, the knife concealed beneath the smiler's cloak, or the patient must be knocked down and treated by force. Hall prefers that :

The satire should be like the porcupine,
That shoots sharp quills out in each angry line,

On the other hand, Mulgrave is in no doubt that blows are less effective than laughther. Dryden agrees :

"Of the best and finest manner of satire..... 'tis that sharp, well-mannered way of laughing a folly out of countenance."

The satirist always intends to pursuade his readers to share his own critical attitude. You cannot be a satirist just by telling the truth ; you are a satirist when you consciously compel men to look at what they have tried to ignore, when you wish to destroy their illusions or pretences, when you deliberately tear off the disguise and expose the naked truth. Satire is the art of persuasion and persuasion is the chief function of the rhetoric —— the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others. So, satire is a department of rhetoric.

The satirist sees not the truth, but one aspect of the truth ; not the whole man, but one side of him. He is the advocate pleading a cause, and to secure our agreement he is prepared to ignore much of the evidence and exaggerate the rest. The satirist proceeds characteristically by drastic simplification, by ruthlessly narrowing the area of vision, by leaving out of account the greater part of what must be taken into consideration if we are to realise the totality of a situation or a character. It is, of course, part of the satirist's art to conceal from us that this simplification is taking place, and he does this by endeavouring to obtain 'an absolute dominion over the minds of the reader.' He can obtain this dominion by many different methods : by throwing dust in our eyes, by fascinating us with the verisimilitude of his presentation, by so delighting us with his wit that we never pause to question his argument. The satirist, for his part, is putting a case, and to put it effectively, he magnifies, diminishes, distorts, cheats : the end with him always justifies the means. Satire is not for the literal-minded. It exists on at least two levels, the overt and the implied ; and it can only function properly when the tact and the intelligence and the imagination of the satirist are met by a corresponding response in the reader. The satirist must be sincere, keenly perceptive, discriminating, and controlled. He fails when emotion clouds his intellect ; he must express his satirical passion logically and coolly if it is to be significant.

English literature is rich in satire. "*The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman*" is the first important work which, by reason of its pervading spirit, may be regarded as satiric. Langland was a minor cleric, and, impelled by a stern moral purpose, he gives in allegorical form a sincere and critical picture of social conditions during the second half of the 14th century The picture is dark : the church has abandoned the simple truths of the Scriptures, and men no longer fulfil their proper duties. All classes rouse the poet's indignation, though his sympathies are clearly with the poor.

Langland's contemporary was Chaucer England which Chaucer so vividly presents is a brighter England than Langland's. His spirit is one of good humour and tolerance ; his humanity and clear vision recreate for us people as they lived and make him one of the greatest story-tellers. Only incidentally is Chaucer a satirist : in "*Sir Thopas*" he burlesques rambling metrical romances ; in the *Prologue* to "*The Canterbury Tales*" his criticism neatly flicks several of the characters. The three portraits, The Monk, The Friar and The Pardoner, are clear satirical sketches of the 14th century.

In the 15th century, the influence of William Langland was predominant. The English and Scottish Chaucerians were the echoes of the author of "*Piers the Plowman*." Among them, Lydgate, Dunbar and Skelton are prominent. Skelton was a versatile and gifted poet and one of the boldest and liveliest satirists. He attacks the court and clergy. Dunbar is a satirist with a strong vein of grotesque humour and a spate of invective. He has a lively imagination and considerable technical skill. The friars, the law courts, and women are some of his targets ; burlesque is one of his favourite methods. The work of Lyndsay shows him as first and foremost a reformer. His satire is earnest and forceful, and boldly directed against specific evils in the church, politics and social life.

Unfortunately the Elizabethan satirists made an assumption—— that satire should be obscure. Donne's satires are distinguished by force of thought and pungent wit. They have greater sincerity and reality than Hall's satires. In Donne's satires the reader goes staggering from one couplet to another, coming up against unexpected objects in the half-darkness and never really sure where the poet is taking him.

Ben Jonson is supreme in satirical comedy. He was a critic of his art who venerated the classics and, through his comedy of humours, sought to assert the realistic and satirical strain of comedy and to free it from romantic extravagance. In the prologue to "*Every Man in his Humour*" he announces his intentions ; proposing to give :

> "*Deeds, and language, such as men do use,*
> *And persons, such as comedy would choose,*
> *When she would show an image of the times,*
> *And sport with human follies, not with crimes.*"

A keen observer, a master of virile comic characterization and a sound moralist, he gives us the loveliest satirical pictures of the fools and rascals of his age. His best-know satirical comedies are *Volpone and The Alchemist.*

Cleveland's satires are mainly political. His satire is a rapid fire of abuse delivered in harsh verse. Dryden says : "We can't read a verse of Cleveland without making a face at it, as if every word were a pill to swallow." Cleveland is, however, historically important ; he first clearly struck out towards satire in party politics and his style of exaggerated scoffing prevailed until Dryden.

"*Hudibras*" is the greatest satire before "*Absolam and Achitophel*" and remains the masterpiece of satire on the grotesque manner. Butler's method in *Hudibras* is not quite uniform. Prof. W.P.Kerr pointed out one of the strange contradiction in him : "he is up to date in his thinking, and at the same time he is out of date and old-fashioned in his manner and style." It was Butler's defect or his misfortune that he never found any perfectly adequate form of expression for what he had in mind. In *Hudibras*, there are one or two passages of mock-heroic, and many more in which he is simply calling a spade a spade ; but his prevalent method is that of burlesque. Behind the satire of Juvenal and Swift and Pope, of Voltaire and Shaw, there lies some vision of the good life, of order and decency, of good sense and moderation, of intelligence and spiritual alertness. It would not be quite true to say that no positive values emerge from Butler's *Hudibras*, but he is so set on bethumping his victims that we are conscious of little else than the dust and the clatter.

In verse satire, Dryden excels all others. Amiable by temperament, indignation drives him neither to the malice of Pope, nor to the disgust of Swift. He assumes no moral airs, firmly controls his satirical spirit, and skilfully selects the points and manner of his attacks. His satires are free from the harshness as well as the violence of the second-rate work. Dryden, gifted with greater restraint and humour, selects effective details and assembles them into a more significant picture and more glorious mockery. This aspect of Dryden's work is clearest in "*Absolam and Achitophel*", the finest of all political satires. This poem has far more variety of tone ; there is little of the angry satire of "*The Medal.*" In *Mac Flecknoe*, he has written something for himself. This famous poem might be better described as a highly-developed lampoon than satire, and it may serve to remind us again how damaging and unjust a lampoon may be.

In the 18th century, satire was in the full scale. Pope had command over the technique of satire. He carried the couplet to its subtlest refinement. A patient and sensitive artist excelling in the miniature, he gave the couplet a flawless elegance and developed the stinging quality which made it the perfect weapon for his malicious satire. He is less discriminating than Dryden, and lacks Dryden's

skill in developing a portrait. Pope stigmatizes his victim at once, and then spins upon his idea with numerous illustrations. In place of Dryden's masculine force, he has an exquisite pungency, a quality in which he is unrivalled. His most charming work is the social satire, '*The Rape of the Lock*.' It is unsurpassed as a society poem and is the best example of the mock-heroic in English verse. '*The Dunciad*' is an onslaught on the tribe of dunces and on dullness itself, covering a wide field of personal and general satire.

Dr. Johnson also wrote a satirical poem '*Vanity of Human Wishes*.' Into this sombre and powerful imitation of Juvenal's tenth satire, Johnson poured his own experience of life and his own sad stoicism. Of this poem we might say what Johnson himself said of Dryden's poetry, that it is the result of 'a vigorous genius operating upon large materials'. Johnson's satire has great power and great control ; it is charged with strong feeling, and its argument moves forward with a disciplined eloquence.

No other major English writer is so charged with the spirit of satire as Swift. Among the satirists, he stands first in force of intellect and devastating power. Though he was rent by savage anger, it is quietness, lucidity, and coherence which make his satire so telling. In general, Swift's satirical intentions are not in doubt, except on two important grounds. The first is that irony always baffles the dull and the stupid ; and the second is that in most of his satires the writer or the speaker is not Swift himself, but some personae that he has assumed for the occasion. If we do not realize who the personae is, and what he presents, we shall misunderstand the irony, and so, inevitably, misinterpret Swift's satirical intentions. What especially distinguishes Swift's satire is his ability to insinuate his ideas into the mind of his reader and this is largely a matter of finding the form that suits them best. "*Gulliver's Travels*" is his most pleasing work, and, at the same time, his most complete satire. As a masterpiece of intellect "*A Tale of a Tub*" is, however, superior.

In this very era two great satirists, Addison and Steel, deserve the attention of the reader. Politics, religion and literature came within the essayist's field, but their particular purpose was the raising of moral and social standards. They ridiculed the follies of beaux and coquettes, coarseness, and self-indulgence. Their social satire was effective ; based on good sense and taste, it is keen and firm but always genial and dignified and, though generalized, is skilfully pointed by the invention of story and character. Their didactic element is always controlled by the artistic.

Oliver Goldsmith is another satirist of this age. His chief satirical work is '*The Citizen of the World*,' a series of essays in the form of letters supposed to be written by a Chinese philosopher travelling in England. The essays are akin to those of Addison. Goldsmith was a warm-hearted man ; a wandering life and poverty

had neither narrowed his sympathies nor clouded his simplicity. His satire is shrewd but always humane. Goldsmith's range is wider than Addison's ; less restricted to the manners of the day, his humorous commentary reaches out to literature, the theatre, the clergy, the laws, the political ideas. His style is easy, lucid, and felicitous, an admirable medium for light criticism.

Byron was one of the most vigorous and powerful satirists of England during the 19th century. In satire he found the suitable medium for his rebelism and passionate nature. At the basis of his satire lies his refusal to recognise the authority of a social code which he asserted to be the representative of cant and corruption. Against conventional religion, conventional political beliefs, the arbitrary ethical code, Byron directed his satire relentlessly. *Don Juan* is a merciless exposure of a petty, canting society. It is the satire of a sensitive, disillusioned man, a man who hated tyranny and hypocrisy.

The domain of the English novel is not free from satire. Fielding is the first satirical novelist. In "*Joseph Andrews*" and "*Tom Jones*" he adopts the vein of the mock-epic, but these novels are more than satires. His most compact satire is in "*Jonathan Wild*" which rivals "*A Tale of a Tub*" as a masterpiece of irony. Fileding was a London magistrate and, provoked by many works of glorifying criminals, especially Jonathan Wild, he gives a scathing exposure of villainy and a graphic picture of low life.

There never has been a nimbler, shrewder observer of human nature than Meredith. His humour lacks the geniality of Dickens, and the easy breadth of Fielding ; but there is a keener intellectual vision behind. Less universal in his appeal as a humourist, he has no rival as a satirist, for his satire is keen, subtle, incisive and never blunted as Dicken's occasionally was by over-emphasis, or as Thackeray's was by sentimentality.

A creative artist of tremendous verve and fantastic humour, Dickens is also a fierce critic of the Victorian social and political scene. Although his satire sweeps a wider field than Thackeray's, he is not, like Thackeray, satirical in spirit ; rather, his attacks are those spontaneously provoked in a generous nature. His satire is hot and sincere, and hits hard, but it reveals a lack of subtlety and intellectual control ; it is far inferior to his comic creation.

Although his greatest novels are far more than satires, the satirical strain is well-marked in Thackeray. It is apparent in the portraits of his novels, particularly in those of "*Vanity Fair*" ; it runs through many of his miscellaneous works.

Of the 20th century satirists none has been more effective within his carefully limited range than the late Sir Mase Beerbohm. His satire is

more a matter of tone and atmosphere than of a palpable hit ; it seems to originate in a fastidious distaste for excess, extravagance, over-emphasis, crudity, absurdity, ——for any thing that disturbs his own delicately adjusted balance and his own poised normality ; and it is conveyed to us by a style which expresses the subtlest shades of irony and the gentlest shrugs of protest.

Satire will not disappear while man is imperfect. Today candditions are less favourable for the production of great satire than those which prevailed in the days of Dryden, Swift, and Pope : values are less stable. But the field is worked by many, including G.B. Shaw, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley and W. Lewis. In the modern age, satire is more social rather than personal. It is purely concerned with the weaknesses and foibles of modern social institutions which are victims of human idiosyncracies.

9 Irony

Irony, besides being the art of inversion, is also the art of innuendo, an indirect suggestion often with sinister connotations. Irony achieves its cherished goal by means of exaggeration, omission, undertreatment and ambiguity, the unsaid and the implied being more significant than the said. It is the art of "double-dealing" in words.

Irony elicits maximum participation from the reader and is comparable to electricity in its versatility. Electricity is always at our service ; but if we take undue liberties with it, it can kill us or leave us shocked and shuddering. Similar is the case with irony. It is a method of criticism, which requires impartiality of judgment and sincerity of intention. Sometimes enmity may incite an ironic utterance, but the basic motive behind such an utterance must be based on a desire to expose the truth. Irony may spring from a lust for conquest, but the enemy is to be convicted by truth.

The job of an ironist is very delicate, because it always hinges on the border of bitterness and misunderstanding. He is concerned with incongruity between the transitory and the permanent in the natural pattern of things. His places ridiculous things amongst the dignified, bad amongst good and false amongst the genuine, so that their ridiculousness, badness and falseness may become obvious to all sensible people. Plato has revealed the ironists secret in the following words : "Serious things cannot be understood without laughable things."

Irony is an impracticable joke. In a practical joke, a single victim is enough and comedy is the result. The percepient of irony always feel themselves to be the members of a small, select, secret society headed by the author. The victims, by implication, are numberless. The ironist appeals to an aristocracy of brains. It requires mental exertion to comprehend even the simplest and crudest form of irony —— sarcasm. Sarcasm is a derivation from a Greek word, which means "flesh-tearing". When we dislike a writer's irony, we call it sarcasm.

Verbal irony is produced by an inversion of meaning. It compels the reader to convert apparent praise into blame. It can stir complacency in men and shatter all facile optimism. Chaucer is an expert in his kind of irony. Of the "Wife of Bath" he remarks: "She was a worthy woman al hir lyve." And of the Friar he says, "There was no man nowher so vertuous." Irony of inversion reaches its greatest concentration and brilliance in the mock encomium. Fielding transformed the spirit of mock encomium into a modern form, *i. e.*, full length novel. Irony is never so sweet as when a character seems to defend his cause with consistency, but in reality gives it completely away. Fielding's Jonathan Wild is an example in this respect. Jonathan does this in his famous soliloquy on greatness in chapter IV of the novel.

Irony, at times, may express itself in the form of under-statements or exaggeration. The ultimate end in both the methods is the same : exposure of reality.

In English literature, Chaucer's is the first perceptible influence in the genre of irony. He is gay and facetious in his writings. His humours manifests itself in the device of irony. His indifference towards his "victims" is a testimony of an unemotional detachment on his part by which he achieves ironic impact. His is an irony of under statement made by a detached onlooker of human panorama, whose comments warm and tickle our hearts. He exploited the technique of "shock mechanism" to produce ironic effects. While describing the prioress, he would raise our hopes by saying : "She was so charitable and so piteous she would wepe", only to be frustrated in the very next line with the exposition that the object of her pity was the sight of "a mouse kaught in a trappe." The irony of misplaced emotions is evident here. His irony keeps the reader alert and amused.

The eighteenth century saw the elevation of irony to its zenith. Swift is the supreme master of irony. His irony is great and individualistic at the same time. His irony is often double-edged : he attacks general tendencies through particular absurdities, and *vice versa.* To his discredit, Swift possessed an excess of zeal and an inablity to curb sufficiently his swelling indignation. Good taste, a sense of proportion, and a fundamental sympathy with mankind constitute the criterion of irony. But the irony of '*Gulliver's Travels*' is not without indignation and fury.

Pope's poetry is permeated with a sense of acerbic irony. '*Rape of the Lock*' exposes mannerism and foibles of the "fair sex" in a very poignent manner. He uses the device of "anti-climax" to achieve ironic impression. Similary, the poetry of Dryden is also replete with the spirit of irony.

The conflict of good and evil is the central fact of intellectual experienee. From age to age man wrestles with chaos and tries to

prevail order. Dramatic irony attempts at filling the gulf and regularising the cosmos. In a dramatic presentation, the spectator has the additional advantage of knowing more than the actors. Besides a superiority in factual information, dramatic irony presupposes a kind of secret knowledge in the audience. The prophecy, the dream, the monstrous portent and the ill-omens are warnings, lost on the actors, but charged with significance, for the audience. Examples of dramatic irony abound in Shakespeare. Macbeth, Lear and Hamlet are victims of the tragic ironical delusion. They have but little knowledge of their dooms which they quicken through their ambitiousness, imperiousness and reflectiveness respectively. The audience know more than any of these protagonists, and hence the irony of the situation. The plays of Ben Jonson, G. B. Shaw and T S. Eliot are deeply charged with irony. Irony adds a new dimension to their art.

Irony directs men's attention to their own conduct and teaches them that their faults lie in themselves, not in their stars. If irony infuses an element of comedy into tragedy, no less does it inject tragic feeling into comedy. Without irony, tragedy degenerates into "melodrama" and comedy into "farce." Laughters and tears are reconciled in irony ; it brings laughter to tragedy and tears to comedy. Irony acts as a balancing power to the emotions raised by either tragedy or comedy.

Jane Austen's novels are replete with subtle irony. Her irony is quick and light ; it flashes and is gone ; it is gloriously allusive, and we feel its sting but we can only laugh, for it is 'little' irony permeated by humour. Jane Austen has thus shown the suitability of the novel for a light and amiable use of irony.

Conrad, among the novelists, uses dramatic irony with exquisite art. He has a profound vision of human character and of destiny. Hence the complexity of his technique of narration. So does Aldous Huxley.

Irony is, therefore, an instrument of the intellect. It is negative in its nature ; it gains an eternal dimension only when it is used for a positive, creative purpose.

Irony requires vigilance on the part of the reader. Only an alert mind can understand and appreciate the impact of irony. The reader of verbal irony keeps his eyes close to the page, for he has to wrestle with every sentence of inversion or understatement. In irony of manner, the author presents his ironic materials as obvious and simple truth. At first, the reader wonders at the discrepancy in his logic; then he grows suspicious, and ultimately he discovers the fraud in the actor's manner. Hence it has been rightly remarked that "irony is not meant for shallow minds."[1]

10 Fashions in Literature

When we study English literature from the Renaissance period to the Modern Age, we find that it has passed through various stages of development. This development, however, is not straight, because there are always movements and counter-movements. What is held important in one age is discarded in the next, until its own time comes, when the next age sets up its own standards, and brings down those which were held sacred by the preceding age. In this way the literature of a nation marches on, now the pendulum moves to one extreme, now to the other, never at rest, but alawys swinging to this side or that. Like the fashion of clothes, the fashion in literature also changes with the change in time. Just as life is constantly changing and renewing itself, and is never static, literature, the reflection of life, is a constantly changing phenomenon. Moreover, change is the law of nature, and it applies with equal force to all the human activities, and especially to literature which is the most sensitive product of man's mind and soul. The following lines of Tennyson apply with full vigour to literature :

> *"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,*
> *And God fulfills himself in many ways*
> *Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."*

In order to illustrate this let us take up English literature from the Renaissance period, and study its development up to modern times. The chief characteristic of the Renaissance was its emphasis on Humanism, which means man's concern with himself as an object of contemplation. The writers of the period became deeply interested in the problems of human personality. In drama, Marlowe probed into the deep recesses of the human passion. His heroes, Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus and Barabas, are under the sway of uncontrolled ambitions. Shakespeare, a more consummate artist, carried humanism to perfection. His genius, fed by the spirit of the Renaissance, enabled him to see life in its entirety and to present it in all its aspects. Moreover, the revealing of the writer's own mind became full of interest. This tendency led to the rise of a new literary form ——the essay —— which was used successfully by Bacon.

Besides humanism, the other important charactristic of the Renaissance literature was the Romantic spirit. In the poetry of Spenser, we forget the harsh relities of life, and are lifted into a fairy land where we see the knights performing chivalric deeds for the sake of the honour of Queen Gloriana. There is beauty, music and harmony in Spenser's poetry, and he composes his poems in the spirit of a great painter and a great musician. The plays of Shakespeare are romantic, in which he gives a free reign to his imagination, and he has written them in a language which is rich and exuberant.

The seventeenth century which followed the Renaissance period produced literature which was just the opposite. We no longer find great imaginative writers of the stature of Shakespeare, Spenser and Sidney. There is a great change in the temperament of the writers. The new spirit can be defined as the spirit of observation and of preoccupation with details, and a systematic analysis of facts, feelings and ideas. In other words, it was the spirit of science popularised by such great men as Newton, Bacon and Descartes. In the field of literature, this spirit manifested itself in the form of criticism.

The seventeenth century up to 1660 was dominated by Puritanism, the noblest representative of which was Milton. The Puritan Movement stood for liberty of the people from the shackles of the despotic ruler as well as the introduction of morality and high ideals in politics. Thus it had two objects —— personal righteousness and civil and religious liberty. In other words, it aimed at making men honest and free. Milton, the greatest Puritan poet, wrote "Paradise Lost" in order "to justify the ways of God to men."

After the Restoration in 1660, when Charles II came to throne, there was a complete repudiation of the Puritan ideas and the way of living. Instead of having Shakespeare and the Elizabethans as their models, the poets and dramatists of the Restoration period began to imitate French writers and especially their vices. But later on the writers of the Restoration period began to evolve something that was characteristic of the times and they made two important contributions to English literature in the form of realism and a tendency to preciseness.

In the beginning realism took an ugly shape, because the writers painted the real pictures of the corrupt society and court. They were more concerned with vices rather than virtues. The result was a coarse and inferior type of literature. Later this tendency to realism and preciseness became more wholesome and the writers tried to portray realistically human life as they found it——its good as well as bad side, its internal as well as external shape. The Royal Society, which was established during this period, enjoined on all its members to use "a close, naked, natural way of speaking and writing, as near the mathematical plainness as they can". Dryden accepted this rule for his prose, and for his poetry adopted the easiest type of

verse form——the heroic couplet. The Restoration period was deficient in drama and poetry as compared to the Renaissance period ; but in prose it holds its head much higher. For the first time prose style was evolved which could be used for plain, narrative, argumentative exposition of intricate subjects and the handling of practical business.

In the eighteenth century, the classical tendency, started during the Restoration period, reached its perfection and that is why it is called the Classical Age. The scientific spirit of observation and analysis, the realistic tendency with its emphasis on precision and exactness, and the supremacy of reason over imagination——became the chief characteristics of the new age in which the English writers rebelled against the exaggerated and fantastic style of writing prevalent during the Renaissance and Puritan ages. Now for the first time in the history of English literature, prose occupied the front position. The prose writes of this age excel the poets in every respect. The graceful and elegant prose of Addison's essays, the terse style of Swift's satires, the sonorous eloquence of Gibbon's history, and the oratorical style of Burke, have no equals in the poetical works of the age. In fact poetry also had become prosaic, because it was no longer used for lofty and sublime purposes, but, like prose, its subject-matter had become criticism, satire and controversy, and it was also written in the form of the essay which was the common literary form. The chief literary glory of the age was, therefore, not poetry but prose which in the hands of great writers developed into an excellent medium capable of expressing clearly every human interest and emotion.

The Romantic Period which followed the Classical Period exhibited just the opposite tendencies. For instance, the main characteristics of classical poetry were : (*i*) it was mainly the product of intelligence and was especially deficient in emotion and imagination ; (*ii*) it was chiefly the town poetry ; (*iii*) it had no love for the mysterious, the supernatural and what belonged to the dim past ; (*iv*) its style was formal and artificial ; (*v*) it was fundamentally didactic ; (*vi*) it insisted on the writer to follow the prescribed rules and imitate the standard models of good writing. The new poetry which showed romantic leanings was opposed to all these points. For instance, its chief characteristics were : (*i*) it encouraged emotion, passion and imagination in place of dry intellectuality ; (*ii*) it was more interested in nature and rustic life rather than in town life ; (*iii*) it revived the romantic spirit——love of the mysterious, the supernatural, the dim past ; (*iv*) it opposed the artificial and formal style, and insisted on simple and natural forms of expression ; (*v*) it attacked the supremacy of the closed couplet and encouraged all sorts of metrical experiments; (*vi*) it believed in the liberty of the poet to choose the theme and the manner of his writing. Whereas the Classical age was the age of prose, the Romantic age was the age of poetry, which was the popular medium for the expression of emotions and imaginative sensibility of

the artist. The essence of Romanticism was that literature must reflect all that is spontaneous and unaffected in nature and in man, and be free to follow its own fancy in its own way. The glory of the age is the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. In fact, poetry was so popular that Southey had to write in verse in order to earn money, what he otherwise would have written in prose.

The Victorian Age was a farrago of romanticism and classicism. All the writers of the age were in search of some sort of balance, stability, a rational understanding in the midst of rapidly changing times. Most of them, like Arnold, favoured the return to precision in form, to beauty within the limits of reason, and to values which had received the stamp of universal approval. It was, in fact, their insistence on the rational elements of thought which gave a distinctive character to the writings of the great Victorians, and which made them akin, to a certain extent, to the writers of the neo-classical school. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold wrote with a superb faith in their messages, and with the conscious moral purpose to uplift and to instruct. Even the novel broke away from Scott's romantic influence. Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot and Hardy wrote with a definite purpose to sweep away error and reveal the underlying truth of humanity. For this reason, the Victorian Age was fundamentally an age of realism rather than of romance. Briefly speaking, the Victorian Age exhibits a very interesting and complex mixture of two opposing elements ——Classicism and Romanticism.

The literature of the Modern Age is opposed to the attitudes, ideas and traditions of the Victorian writers. The Victorians accepted the voice of Authority, ana acknowledged the rule of the Expert in religion, in politics, in literature and family life. They had the innate desire to affirm and confirm rather than to reject or question the opinions of the experts in their respective fields. On the other hand, the twentieth century minds do not take anything for granted ; they question everything. Bernard Shaw attacked not only the "old" superstitions of religion, but also the "new" superstitions of science. The watchwords of his creed are : Question, Examine and Test.

The poetic revolution which was engineered in the twentieth century by the Imagists and which was further encouraged by T S. Eliot's poetry, prefer the classical tradition in English poetry to the Victorian Romantic tradition. The Imagists believe that poems are works of art and not pieces of emotional autobiography or rhetorical prophecy. As the purpose of poetry is the exploration of experience, the poet must strive after a kind of poetic statement, which is both precise and passionate. The drama of the twentieth century has become the drama of ideas which are, for the most part, revolutionary directed against past literary models, current social conventions and corruptions and the prevailing morality of the Victorian England. Ibsen and Galsworthy are the prominent playwrights of the modern era.

From this brief survey of English literature from the Renaissance to the modern times, it becomes clear that in every age new tendencies arise, which are opposed to those of the preceding age. Moreover, the characteristics of a by gone age are revived in another age. For example, the characteristics of the Renaissance period were revived in the Romantic period, and those of the classical period in the modern age. The old traditions do not die away ; they are merely changed and modified. History never entirely repeats itself. The history of thought is less apt to repeat itself than other sequence. The reason is that a new state of mind could not be identical with a former one which it recalls, since it adds to it the continuous experience gained in the interval of time.

POETRY

SELECT QUOTATIONS

"Poets were the first teachers of mankind."

Horace

"Poets and kings are not born every day."

Jasper Mayne

"A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity; he is continually filling some other body."

Keats

"The office of a poet is not that of the moralist."

Walter Pater

"When man acts, he is a puppet. When he describes, he is a poet."

Oscar Wilde

"Poetry is finer and more philosophical than history; for Poetry expresses the universal, and history only the particular."

Aristotle

"Poetry is as charming to our ear as sleep to the weary."

Virgil

"Poetry is the musical thought."

Carlyle

"Poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things."

Matthew Arnold

"Prose —— words in their best order ; poetry —— the best words in their best order."

S. T. Coleridge

"The business of the poet is to give order and coherence and so freedom to a body of experience."

I. A. Richards

"If poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree, it had better not come to all."

Keats

11 Poetry: its Nature and Functions

Strong affinities exist between poetry and reality. But, what is the nature of this relationship? This question is a theme of unending controvercies for the pedants. According to Plato, true reality consists of the ideas of things, of which individual objects are but reflections or imitations. Anyone who imitates these individual objects is imitating an imitation, and so producing some thing which is still further removed from ultimate reality. But Aristotle does not concur with Plato. The poet, Aristotle says, does not simply imitate or represent particular events or situations which he happens to have noted or invented ; he handles them in such way that he brings out their universal and characteristic elements. This doctrine seems to be invalid. We are mindful of the fact that the poet is concerned with reality. not with situations. Moreover, situation is the expression of reality ; reality is never engendered by situation, Macbeth is, by nature, ambitions. Hence, the murder of Duncan. King Lear is drastic-minded and impetuous. Hence, the banishment of Cordelia and its dire consequences. 'O frailty, thy name is woman." Hence, the "over-hasty" marriage of Gertrude with Claudius. All these instances show that the poet aims at depicting reality, not situation. Sidney has his own hypothesis to present. The poet, he says, does not imitate or represent or express or discuss things which already exist ; he creates new things by drawing on "his own wit". This opinion also is not a sound one. Without entering into controversy, it can be stated that the poet does not create anything new. Only Almighty has the authority to do so. Let me remind you that the function of the poet is to depict reality. He is the declarer of the perennial beneath the deciduous. For our convenience, we can say that poetry is the picture of reality, but this picture is not reality. What is reality ? Nothing certain can be said about it. Every artist scrutinizes it from peculiar angles and presents in appropriate words and colours whatever he feels. So this creation is not reality ; but, on the contrary, it is the expression of that effigy of reality which has been seen by the artist.

Between nature and ourselves, nay, between ourselves and our conscious a veil is interposed : a veil that is dense and opaque for the common herd —— thin, almost transparent for the artist and

the poet. We have to live ; and life demands that we should grasp things in their relations to our needs. "Life is action." Life implies the acceptence only of the utilitarian side of things in order to respond to them by appropriate reactions. All other impressions reach us vague and blurred. What we see and hear of the outer world is purely and simply a selection made by our senses to serve as a light to our conduct. Our senses and our conscious, therefore, give us no more than a practical simplification of reality. Things have been classified with a view to the use we can derive from them. And it is this classification which we perceive far more clearly than the reality of things. The individuality of things or of beings escapes us, unless it is materially to our advantage to perceive it. Even when we do take note it, it is not the individuality itself that the eye grasps, but only one or two features that will make practical recognition easier. Briefly speaking, we do not see the actual things, in most of the cases we confine ourselves to reading the lables affixed to them. It is the reality to which artist attains in its undefiled essence. So art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, all that which veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself. It is from a misunderstanding on this point that the dispute between realism and idealism in art has risen. The artist is not a camera, with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Scott James has remarked: "The poet or novelist is not content to "hold mirror up to nature" for the simple reason that the mirror is not truthful enough ; it reflects no more than the appearances of life, while the artist is interested in reality." But the purity of perception implies a break with utilitarian convention, an innate disinterestedness of sense or consciousness, in short, a certain immateriality of life, which is what has always been called idealism. So that we might say that it is only through "ideality" that we can resume contact with "reality."

Under these circumstances, we can say that the poet dedicates his entire talent to the detection of reality. As a matter of fact, the poet does not invent something new. He envinces such points as remain concealed from our eyes; but, at the very first glance, we recognise it as a peculiar but genuine aspect of reality. At this stage, the question of individuality pops up. Individuality means that the poet has relinquished the idea of looking at things from conventional view-point. *Conventional view-point is a curtain which conceals reality from us.* The penetrative eyes of the poet remove this curtain aside and exhibit something real and universal. I have said that the poet depicts something universal. But has he, to digress for a moment, no patriotic feelings ? The genius of Goethe has supplied a satisfactory answer. According to him, the poet, as a man and citizen, will love his native land; but the native land of his poetic powers and poetic actions is the good, noble and beautful, which is confined to no particular province or country. Therein he is like the eagle, who

hovers with free gaze over all the countries; and to whom it is of no consequence whether the hare on which he pounces is running in Prussia or in Saxony."

The visualization of "reality" leaves a peculiar impression on the mind of the poet. But he can't depict this impression due to unsuitable words. The words garbled by the artist to convey this impression are conventional ones. These conventional words do show the generality of the peculiar impression ; but its peculiarity beyond their tether. It is expedient to point out that this very peculiarity is the quiddity of this impression. Finding no way out, a poet has to take these common and conventional words into confidence; but they do not reveal the intrinsic impression. When a poet compares the beauteous face of his sweet-heart with the laconic smile of a rose, we can't say that he has revealed his actual impression to us. Beauteous, laconic smile and rose are conventional words and don't picture the laconic smile and the rose visualized by the poet at the time of this comparison. The rose visualized by the poet has a peculiar proportion ; and this very proportion coerced the poet to institute a comparison between 'beauteous face' and 'the laconic smile of the rose ; but, alas, the word 'rose' can't depict that particular rose. Shelley says: "The poetry which is written is one-tenth of the poetry which was conceived." And his opinion is valid. So we can safely say that poetry is the picture of reality, but this picture is not reality.

Matthew Arnold, the renowned critic of the Victorian Era, interpreted literature in terms of moral values. Ruskin declared that it is the function, the characteristic of art as art, to convey moral truths. Plato concluded that from their very nature arts conflicted with morality, and therefore he relegated them from his ideal state. But Ruskin found that from their very nature arts coincided with morality, and he gave them his blessing. Plato condemned the arts because they were immoral. Ruskin praised them because they were superbly moral. But I regret to say that neither of them is right. The function of the poet is quite different from that of a moralist; and they are poles apart from each other. It is the business of the moralist to teach. It is the business of the artist to show. "Life ought to be like that," says the moralist. "Life looks like that," says the artist. Morality, as Hardy says, differs from village to village ; but the appeal of poetry is universal. The operation of moral code varies considerably according to the conditions in which the act is committed. Again, moral concepts and rules are closely related to the structure of the society; morality is therefore relative in the sense that as end of each society vary, so do the standards of right and wrong. All this discussion leads us to the conclusion that morality is not free from the barriers of time and space. But the poet, as Oscar Wilde says, is the spectator of all time, and of all existence. "In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manner, of laws and customs, the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society

as it is spread over the whole earth and of all time."[1] Referring to the universal personality of the poet, Villium E. Channing has remarked:

Most joyful let the poet be;
It is through him that all men see.

When a poet embodies morality in his art, he fails to discharge his duty in an appropriate way. Shelley says: "Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose." Shelley is not alone in this field. Even Keats says: 'We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us." According to Spingarn, it is not the function of poetry to further any moral or social cause.

Nevertheless, I have no affiance in the hollow slogan——Art for Art's Sake. In sublime poetry, thought and form are interposed in such a way that we can't separate one from the other. Poetry in this matter is not, as good critics of painting and music often affirm, different from the other arts; in all of them the content is one thing with the form. A great poet possesses what Keats calls "negative capability." Hazlitt's short essay "On Gusto" exerted a profound influence on the mind of Keats. By "questo" Hazlitt means an excitement of the imagination in which the perceptive identification with the object is almost complete and the living character of the object is caught and shared in its full diversity and given vital expression in art It is the power or passion defining any object. But the result need not be subjective. But grasping sympathetically the overall significance of the object, the power or passion is a able to co-operate, so the speak, with that significance—— to go to full distance with its potentialities, omitting the irrelevant and conceiving the object with its various qualities."

Many poets find material which is similar to themselves, which corresponds to their own subjectivity ; but as for taking the material on its own account, merely because it it poetical, even when it is poetical, even when it is repugnant to their subjectivity, such a thing is never thought of. Turck says: "Things have an inner life which they reveal only to him who is absorbed in them, whose soul goes out to them." The poet who is endowed with the "negative capability" goes into the very depth of things and reveals their underlying reality. Keats himself possesses this quality. In all his work, nothing is more remarkable than the way he stands aside, and allows, for example, the Nightingale to work her own way with us; we forget to admire the artistry in beauty. There is the embalmed darkness, there is the song of the Nightingale, and there are we ; but Keats has withdrawn to watch this magic working. Whereas Words-

1 Wordsworth : "Preface to Lyrical Ballads."

worth, and the poets like him, will often not be content to allow us just to observe as we will ; we must observe just in the way in which they want us to observe, and draw the conclusions which they want us to draw. But the true poetry, to Keats, is removed as far as may be from this assertive pedagogy. Shakespeare's genius is endowed with an objectivity which makes of him the superlative that he is, capable of seeing things as they are, apart from his own personality, of entering into them and living their life. For him, there is neither good nor bad ; there exists only life, which he calmly observes and sets down in his characters. He does not sacrifice reality to a pre-conceived idea or doctrine. According to some critics, the sole motive of poetry is to delight the reader. "All art is dedicated to joy" says Schiller. For Dryden it is the delight which is the chief, if not the only, end of poesy." These views are partial and lop-sided. Mr. Sitwell has made an illuminating point. He says : "Poetry gives pleasure, only when generally and not perfectly understood." Life, as we see it, is highly chaotic and disorderly. Now it is the artist who presents life to us in such a way as to eliminate what is unrelated, inorganic. He gives us a picture of life as a whole, of which all the part are seen to be co-operative. And there is great delight in seeing a thing in all clearness But this delight is not the "chief" end of poetry. I.A. Richards has remarked : "To read a poem for the sake of the pleasure which will ensue if it is successfully read is to approach it in an inadequate attitude. Obviously, it is the poem in which we should be interested to read it. But the pleasure, however greater it may be, is no more the aim of the activity in the course of which it arises, than, for example, the noise made by a motor-cycle is the reason for its having been started." We don't read poetry merely for the sake of pleasure ; nor does the poet play the role of an entertainer. Moreover, pleasure is transient, while the influence of poetry is sempiternal.

Morality is not the motive of poetry. Similarly, pleasure is not the end of it. Then, what is the aim of poetry ? The sole purpose of poetry, says D.H. Lawrence, is to discover a new world within the known world. Let me elaborate this point Poetry unveils the meaning of all things upon which the heart and the eyes dwell. It discovers the secret rays of the universe, and restores to us the forgotten paradises. It opens up new avenues of thoughts and new vistas of feelings. Poetry strips all the things of the clothes of familiarity and enables as to visualize them in their true colours and shapes. Man must achieve some inner centre from which to view in perspective the versatile environment around him. He seeks to enter into another experience, to glimpse the beauty that the world offers, to fathom the resources of the human spirit, to gain understanding that will make his own experiences more lucid and intelligible, to find moulds into which to pour his own seemingly—or actually—chaotic experiences Poetry helps as in achieving all these purposes. It is the poet who gives us those key-words, the possession of which makes us masters of all the unsuspected treasure cavern of thought and feeling and beauty which open under the dusty path of our daily life.

Life becomes to us a sooty task master, and we crawl through dark passages without end till suddenly the word of some poet redeems us, makes us know where we are. It is to our true relations with the two great worlds of inward and outward nature that the poet re-introduces us. Poetry does not "exhort" us to eschew the mordant reality of life. Its study incites the student to see the painting with both of its shades, black and white. Moreover to realize that it is only the contrast of the two colours, that makes the painting stand. The layman's tendency to speak of poetry as thought it were opium must be arrainged, and set aside.

12

The Romantic Movement

With the advent of Wordsworth and Coleridge, we come across certain prominent trends and tendencies in the poetry of the day which together herald what has been called "The Romantic Movement.' These trends and tendencies were already present in a mild and mixed form in the predecessors of Wordsworth and Coleridge, like Gray, Collins, Burns, etc., who fall into the category of 'Transitional Poets'. So the 'Romantic Movement' was not a sudden event ; it slowly and gradually reached a climax in the hands of such poets as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Byron, Shelley, etc. As a matter of fact, the Romantic Movement was ushered in by a strong reaction against the sophisticated and frivolous poetry of the age of Pope and Johnson and its showy and gaudy phraseology.

The Romantic spirit can be defined as an accentuated predominance of emotional life, provoked or directed by the exercise of imaginative vision, and in its turn stimulating or directing such exercise. Intense emotion coupled with an intense display of imagery, such is the frame of mind which supports and feeds the romantic literature. This interpretation enables us to include and to connect together all the works customarily acknowledged as 'romantic'.

With the publication of the '*Lyrical Ballads*', a joint effort of Wordsworth and Coleridge, a new type of poety came into existence which is known as 'Romantic Poetry.' Wordsworth, the prototype of the Romantic Poets, has remarked : "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, recollected in tranquillity." Further, he says that poet is a man, speaking to man.' The romantic poets look at life from an imaginative and emotional point of view. They write with their heart, not with neither head. They are very much alive to the limitations of reason and seldom rest upon it. They are more concerned with their passionate, restless inner self than with objective reality. This fact accounts for the abundance of lyrics in the 'Romantic Age.' Lyricism thrived so much in this period that sometimes one is led to think that 'Romanticism' is more or less 'Lyricism' Shelley's lyrics are incomparable in the entire field of English poetry.

The Romantic poets value their own experiences to a degree which is difficult to parallel in earlier poets. Spenser, Milton and Pope make verse out of legend or knowledge which is common to humanity. The Romantic poets look into themselves, seeking in their own lives for strange sensations. With Wordsworth, such sensations have a moral value, and are often associated with simple and human objects. With Byron, they arise from the exotic pursuit of some mood or adventure, which man has seldom known before. With Coleridge, they lead to the dream territories of Xanadu. In the poetry of all of them, there is a sense of wonder, of life seen with new sensibilities, and fresh vision. This strangeness of the individual experience leads each of the Romantic poets to a spiritual loneliness. They are keenly aware of their social obligations, but the burden of an exceptional vision of life drives them into being almost fugitive from their fellowmen. This sense, present in them all, can be found most strongly in Shelley, who seems even more content amid the dead leaves, the moonlit water, and the ghosts, than in the places where men inhabit.

According to Compton Rickett, one of the distinguishing features of 'Romanticism' is 'instinct for the elemental simplicities of life.' The sophistication and artificiality of the urban society disgusts Wordsworth and he retires to green fields of nature in order to find his themes and heroes. A simple, solitary reaper of the village thrills him far more than a baron of London. He says : 'My theme is no more than the very heart of man'. He also idealizes childhood :

"*Heaven lies about us in our infancy.*"

An ordinary sunset, a walk over the hills, West wind, the song of the nightingale, a cottage girl, such are a few of the subjects that inspire to supreme achievements a Wordsworth, a Coleridge, a Shelley, a Keats. The poets of the Romantic era draw inspiration from ordinary phenomena of life—— mountains and lakes, dignity of simple human beings, the terror of the supernatural, medieval chivalry and literature, the arts and mythology of Greece. This produces a sense of wonder in the poets, which gains embodiment in their creations. That is why some critics call the Romantic Age as the "Renaissance of Wonder."

Besides, the "Romantic Movement" brought about the revival of beauty. Among the Romantics, Keats is the greatest devotee of the goddess of beauty. He has remarked ; "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." The Romantic Movement is characterized by a sort of escapism. Most of the Romantics, hypersensitive, passionate and restless as they are, feel dissatisfied with the present, and either look backward to the Middle Ages or the ancient Greece or look forward to a golden era of classless society created and sustained by the creative and cementing force of love. Whereas Keats looks before, Shelley looks after. The poets of the 'Romantic Movement' have been divided into two generations. The Lake poets of the first generation, like

Wordsworth and Coleridge, are not so violent and turbulent and uncompromising as the poet of the second generation like Byron and Shelley, who raise the slogan of 'down with kings, thrones and priests. Shelley is a utopian poet.

The Romantics are fully conscious of the fact that distance lends enchantment to the view. They look at things from a distance——a romantic distance. A distant past, a remote future enchants them and thrills them as nothing else does. To a poet, like Keats, unheard melodies are sweeter than heard ones. 'Dafodills fill the mind of Wordsworth with raputer when he recalls the beautiful scene in his bed.

The great Romantic poets feel that their task is to find through imagination some transcendental order, some inner and ultimate reality which explains the outward appearance of things in the visible world and the effect which they produce on us. Each one gives his own interpretation of the universe, the connection between the visible and the invisible, nature and man as he sees it through the power of his imagination. By means of their creative art they try to awaken the imagination of the reader to the reality that lies behind and in familiar things, to rouse him from the deed and dull routine of custom and make him conscious of the unfathomed mysteries of life. They try to show that mere reason is not sufficient to understand the fundamental problems of life ; what is required is imagination or inspired intuition. Thus their view of life and poetry is much wider and deeper than that of their predecessors in the eighteenth century, because they appeal to the whole spiritual nature of man and not merely to his reason and common sense whose scope is limited. It is this emphasis on imagination which, as Pater says, combines beauty with strangeness.

English Romanticism is theout-come of European movement. England received much influence from the other contenental countries ; France being the most influential in particular. French Revolution brought about a drastic change in all things *i.e.*, values, conditions, convictions, etc. The revolution was a consequence of sustained efforts on the part of the writers and politicians. "Man is born free, but he is found everywhere in chains," said Rosseau. The revolution was a big upheaval that shook almost all the states of Europe. The literature between 1789 – 1815 revolves round the crisis. Burns can be named as the first poet to possess a manly sense of virtue. Coleridge and Wordsworth imbibed the influence of revolution. Similarly, the poetry of Byron and Shelley is replete with revolutionary spirit.

The Romantic poets cared little for the form and discarded the heroic couplet which restricted the free movement of their imagination and sentiment. Romanticisim is, as a matter of fact, a revolt against the stern and rigid stipulation of neo-classicism. Too much emphasis on style and method kills the spirit of the message. Beauty of the

poetic vision is distorted and impaired by a stress on the decoration and embellishment of style. The Romantic poets do not care for the rules and conventions of the diction. Wordsworth pleads for the use of common language of life and sees little difference between the language of poetry and prose. Coleridge holds the opinion that the poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre.

Whereas the eighteenth century writers cherish 'objective truth', the new insurgent writers provide a dominent place to 'human self'. Romanticism is not at all a triumph of 'self', but a discovery of original and natural self of man. The Romantic poets are mainly concerned with the expression of their heart-felt passions. They write in a state of semi-consciousness, in an exalted mood and in a condition of higher sensibility. "The poets are possessed creatures"is a famous maxim about the Romantic poets, and it is based on truth. But 'Romantic Poetry' is not merely an expression of personality ; rather the personality of the poet possesses a very characteristic place in it. It is the reaction of the self to its milieu which is recorded in poetry.

Romanticism has certain definite limitations of its own. It was essentially a 'School of Idea', of splendid generalisations. Little attempt was made by its exponents to apply their ideas to the concrete problems of the day ; it harped on man rather men and sought the way of escape from modern and tough conditions of life.

13

Realism in English Poetry

Like many words in constant use, realism has a meaning which is not easy to define. As a rough definition, it may be suggested that realism in art is concerned with giving a truthful impression of actuality (reality) as it appears to the normal human consciousness. If idealism is the beauty of a great literature, realism is its strength ; if idealism attempts to adorn and beautify literature with its sweet blossoms of imagination and fancy, realism vitalizes it with its analytical criticism of man's activities in life.

The artist does not give a mere transcription of life. Balzac says : "The mission of art is not to copy Nature, but to express her. You are not a vile copyist, but a poet. The poet has to seize the spirit, the soul, the expression of beings and things". If a writer gives only a photographic representation of life around him, his work cannot be called literature ; nor will it deserve that name if he is trying to create an imaginary world of flimsy dreams and illusions. Robert Lynd has aptly remarked that "art is not only an escape from life, but an escape into life, and the first escape is of importance only if it leads to the second". The literary artist sees life around him and he reveals to us the significant facts about it. Thus he enlarges the boundaries of reality for us.

Says Anicimor, the famous Russian critic and poet, "Literature should not live in an 'Ivory Tower' ; it should participate in people's movement, and play its creative, constructive and reformative role". According to T.S. Eliot, "The soul of a nation, the true ideals of its civilization, the real message of the people's inner self, are expressed in its literature. The authors are the legislators, though unacknowledged, of mankind".

The poetry of realism is an essential and characteristic part of the English poetic heritage. Its survey must begin with Chaucer, the greatest realistic poet of the Middle Ages. He was the first poet who revealed the truth about life as he saw it. Before him, the writers were busy in weaving dreamy allegories, but Chaucer threw away these artificial shackles and gave a realistic description of contemporary society in his "*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*". '*The Prologue*' is the crown and flower of Chaucer's dramatic and humorous realism. Here the fantastic world of romance and allegory

melts away and we see the whole stream of English society in the fourteenth century.

In the sixteenth century, the medieval tradition of poetic realism was, for the most part, eclipsed by Petrarchan and Platonic idealism. It does not, however, mean that realism wholly died out in the sixteenth century poetry. Shakespeare may be reckoned as the last of the great poetic realists in the medieval manner when he writes such poetry as the "Song of Antolycus".

The courtier poets of the Restoration period were responsible for establishing what we might call the second great realistic school of English poetry. The realism of the Augustans is really the result of the successful attempt of English poetry to survive in the hard, mechanical universe created by the philosophers and scientists of the seventeenth century, by Descartes and Hobbes and Newton. The poets invented a new weapon to face the challenge of the times. This new weapon was that of satiric humour. In his political satires, Dryden has given a realistic reflection of the main tendencies of his age. Pope, in his Rape of the Lock, has given a truthful and true description of the eighteenth century life in its manifold aspects. His poem is a neat and perfect picture of the feminine frivolities of the upper strata of society and of the gay, idle luxuries of their male counterparts. It exercises a peculiar fascination on the minds of the readers, because the picture of social life is realistic and faithful.

In the eighteenth century, another kind of realistic poetry also developed. It dealt with the realistic description of landscape and country-life. Its chief exponents are Thomson, Dyer and their successors, leading upto Cowper's notable achievement in "The Task" and elsewhere.

French Revolution, as a matter of truth, imparted a new note of realism to English Literature. It made English poetry, in particular, a poetry concerning the lives of common men and women, who had been miserably ignored by the earlier poets. It taught the poets to shun the poetry of rigid intellectualism and artificial affectation and formalism. The poets made 'Liberty' and 'Equality' the main currents of their poetic thoughts. No longer were they fascinated by the so-called autocracy of art; they took up the democratic view of life as the main theme of their poetry.

Wordsworth is essentially the greatest romantic poet, he may be called the prototype of the Romantic Movement——the sublimest and greatest period of English poetic art. Wordsworth's romanticism, however, has its roots in realism. He always draws from life and its commonplace experiences the inspiration of his poetry. "In appearance, Wordsworth's poetry is summed up in an exact faithfulness to reality".

"Wordsworth's romantic realism", says Dr. Mary Wooland, "in its ultimate stage, takes up the idea of spiritual realism". Wordsworth was indeed the architect of Romantic realism in English poetry ; but it must be noted that he guarded himself against stark realism. To him, realism is poetic so long as it is allied to Romanticism. Man is shown by him in the setting of Nature, in strict accordance with the daily observation and without a trace of exaggeration or embellishment. He heard the "still, sad music of humanity" and suggested to man that all his miseries and misfortunes would vanish as soon as he (man) went to Nature and embraced her.

Wordsworth, it must be noted, guards himself against the accusation of 'Absolute Realism' by the use of imagination in the poetic transformation of his materials. On one hands, he differs from Crabbe and Cowper, in whom naturalism has led to literal, unimaginative treatment of life, while, on the other hand, from Shelley, whose exurberant fancy is apt to turn reality into effusions of pure imagination. In his blending of reality and imagination, Wordsworth resembles his own sky lark and shows himself to be——

> *"Type of the wise who soar, but never roam*
> *True to the kindered points of Heaven and Home".*

In his famous 'Ode to a Nightingale' Keats touches a very deep philosophic problem——whether the grim realism of life can be forgotten by living in the calm and tranquil tower of imaginative idealism. He finally realizes that so long as man is living in this world, he can never get rid of grim realism of life——

> *"Forn ! the very word is like a bell,*
> *That tolls me back to from thee :*
> *Adieu ! Fancy cannot cheat so well,*
> *As she is famed to do—— deceiving elf".*

According to Keats, the realism of life lies in suffering pains, miseries, misfortunes calmly and unmurmuringly : there is no escape from the grim realism of life.

Byron, like Wordsworth, is temperamentally a realistic ; but, unlike Wordsworth, he is neither a prophet nor a mystic, possessing a spiritual vision. He has abandoned the romantic view of imagination ; he practises a new realistic art. He follows the satiric vein of Dryden and Pope and shows a fierce appetite for reality. Professor Grierson says : "Shelley moves among the clouds, but Byron never quits the earth. From first to last he is concerned with realities and nothing but realities, mundane realities, real persons and scenes and happenings". His 'Don Juan' is an epic of the age as it gives a panoramic view of contemporary life, and in the poetic search light turned on several facts of actual life, we discover a wide range of the poet's taste and wonderful varieties of his response to experience.

The Victorian age was marked by a spirit of inquiry, criticism, scepticism, religious unrest and spiritual struggle. Amid the seeming vortex of ideas, there appeared to be the supremacy of two currents—democracy and scientific progress. The analytic and critical state of mind, fostered by the progress of science, has led to the development of realism in the poetry of Tennyson. The scientific perception of Tennyson is clearly noticeable in his poetry. Accurate observation and delicate poetic feelings are happily blended in his verse.

Browning has introduced another kind of realism in English poetry. This is known as 'Psychological Realism', Browning has a tendency towards intellectual analysis of human nature. In his dramatic monologues, he has laid bare the inner working of human mind and soul. He is a psychologist first of all ; art with him takes secondary place.

Disillusionment, criticism and realism are the three cardinal traits of poetry which is known as Georgian. This note of realism is found chiefly in the poetic art of Masefield, Gibson, Rupert, Brooke and Sassoon.

The twentieth century has seen the birth of a new kind of poetic realism. T.S. Eliot has extended the scope of poetic realism by interpreting the boredom and frustration of modern urban life, and also by linking poetry again to religious traditions.

Modern poets maintain a queer realism, which has a rebellious tendency. They rebel against the modern society and its unjust conventions. According to them, the birds in the morning do not sing with joy, they cry with hunger. The entire world has one main problem before it—the solution of bread problem :

> "*All life moving to one measure*
> *Daily bread and daily bread*
> ... ...
> *Life of toil, life of sorrow,*
> *Hand to mouth, and nothing tomorrow*".

If poetry is to survive at all, it will no longer be able to rely on the help of mythology, or even on that 'willing suspension' of disbelief for the moment' of which Coleridge spoke, but will have to continue the great movement begun by Wordsworth. To succeed greatly it will have to achieve a realism which, in the words of Stephen Spencer, must not be an imitation but an analysis of the society in which we are living ; and at the same time it will have to live :

> "*Not in utopia, subterranean fields,*
> *Or some secreted island, Heaven know where !*
> *But in the very world, which is the world*
> *Of all of us,—the place, where in the end,*
> *We find our happiness, or not at all*".

14 The Metaphysical School of Poets

The term 'metaphysical' has been in use to describe the special characteristics and features of the poetry of Donne and of those who were influence by him, *viz.*, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, and Robert Cowley. The term was first employed by Dr. Johnson long after the poets to whom we apply it were dead. The suggestion for this phrase, however, came from Dryden, who said of Donne : "He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign ; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love".

The phrase 'metaphysical' denotes, in Saintsbury's word, "the habit, common to this school of poets, of always seeking to express something after, something behind, the simple obvious first sense and suggestion of a subject".

Metaphysical poetry has been defined by Professor Grierson as "a poetry which has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence". According to this definition, a metaphysical poet would be one whose work expresses a systematized and coherent philosophical or theological view of the nature of things : a poet such as Lucretius, Dante or Milton. The metaphysical poets are not of this sort. As a matter of fact, their work is often concerned with the lack of coherence and certainty in the world in which they found themselves.

According to Bennet, the word 'metaphysical refers to style, rather than the subject-matter. But style reflects an attitude to experience. Experience to the metaphysical poets was grist to an intellectual mill. They looked for a connection between their emotion and mental concepts. All poetical imagery arises from a perceived likeness between different things. The peculiarity of the metaphysical poet is not that they relate, but that the relations they perceive are more logical than sensuous or emotional, and that they constantly connect the abstract with the concrete, the remote with the near, and the sublime with the commonplace. In metaphysical poetry, emotions are shaped and expressed by logical reasoning,

and both sound and picture are subservient to this end. Words consecrated to poetry are avoided because such words have accumulated emotion. Thus they cut themselves off from one of the common means of poetry and become entirely dependent on a successful fusion between thought and feeling.

The metaphysical poets are far more intellectual, and their intellectuality is expressed in the matter and manner of their poetry. In their verse, they seek to express and to explore ideas and feelings about the complex and changing world they live in, and also about their own nature. Their learning and intellectual training are incorporated also in their mode of expression : they draw on their intellectual knowledge for much of the imagery by which their ideas and feelings are communicated and they constantly analyse and argue about these ideas and feelings. Their poems develop along the lines of logical argument ; the poet examines a feeling, explores its ramification and seeks to throw new light on it by viewing it from new and unexpected angles and by finding connections between it and his intellectual concepts. Moreover, the intellectual concepts themselves generated feeling in these poets, as T S. Eliot has said : "A thought to Donne was an experience : it modified his sensibility " So in metaphysical poetry we find a remarkable fusion of thought and feeling ; whereas in Augustan poetry the intellect is predominant, and in the nineteenth century poetry the ideal is 'poetry conceived and composed in soul'. (Matthew Arnold). This is not to say that Augustan poet did not feel and the Romantic poets did not think ; their feeling and thinking did not harmonize and interact, as did that of the metaphysical poets.

The fusion of thought and feeling is clearly seen when we consider metaphysical imagery. All imagery is based upon the perception of some similarity between different things. A famous example is Donne's comparison, in A Validiction forbidding Mourning, of two lovers to a pair of compass. A very important aspect of metaphysical imagery is that it is used, not as mere ornament or illustration, but as a means of communicating thought and of exploring experience and achieving new insight into it. This is the purpose of a metaphysical conceit. A conceit is an extended comparison. The development of conceit is the development of thoughts. Metaphysical imagery is one of the instruments of minds of great flexibility and subtlety, and these qualities are shown also in the complexity of attitudes often to be found in metaphysical poetry.

Dr Johnson first of all employed the term 'metaphysical' for Donne and his followers ; he also used the word 'wit' to describe the special quality of their poetry. The wit of the metaphysical poets can be described in the words of T.S. Eliot 'as a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience, simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic'. The wide learning of the metaphysical poets has become a part of their poetic sensibility and it has proved itself of extreme value to them in discovering universal analogy in the midst of the most diverse kind of experiences.

The metaphysical poets, in Johnson's words, desire to say what they hoped had been never said before. They have endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts "They played with thoughts", said Walter Scott, "as the Elizabethan had played with words". In fact, they have carried the Elizabethan freedom of imagination and delight in verbal fancies to a point at which it has become difficult for the average reader to grasp their meaning

One of the most significant achievement of the metaphysical poets is that, controlling their imagination and sensibility, they have succeeded in securing a perfect balance in a blend of passion and intellectual subtelty. Grierson has rightly emphasised that 'the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination, is the greatest achievement of metaphysical poets.'

The metaphysical poets have certain common characteristics. Firstly, their poetry is, to a great extent, lyrical. Secondly, their subject-matter is chiefly religious or amatory.

Metaphysical poets have succeeded to a considerable extent in forging a distinctive poetic diction of their own, which stands in sharp contrast with the poetic language of the Elizabethans, on the one hand, and with the artificial and ornate style of the Augustans on the other. In the choice of their words and rhythms metaphysical poets are governed more by their desire to express their meaning effectively rather than by the desire to produce any spectacular effect.

T.S. Eliot says : "In the task of trying to find the verbal equivalent for state of mind and feeling, the metaphysicals have made themselves difficult to understand". Recondite imagery and remote connections render a poem difficult to understand but the meaning of the poem is not obscure for the reader who can make the necessary effort to understand it. Metaphysical poetry does not attract the lazy and its lovers belong to a privileged class able to enjoy what is beyond the reach of vulgar wits.

On account of the efforts of Professor Grierson, T.S. Eliot and many others of the modern critics, Donne has now become established as one of England's great poets. The revival of interest in the poetry of Donne and his school has been regarded as one of the most significant features of modern English poetry ; this revival of interest is not the outcome of a shifting literary taste but of a deep-rooted similarity between the age of Donne and our own age. There are two features of the twentieth-century interest in metaphysical poetry in general and in the poetry of Donne in particular. Firstly, the readers of the present age are better able to appreciate poetry of Donne and his school than their predecessors and secondly, the poets of our own age have been drawn to the metaphysicals and have learnt from them a good deal in regard to their style and poetic technique. What is more significant about the attraction that the poetry of

Donne has for the twentieth century reader, is that Donne was a rebel against the literary conventions of his age, just as modern poetry, under the leadership of T.S. Eliot, started with a smashing of romantic conventions and values of poetry. The note of revolt that proves the metaphysicals to be kindred souls with the modern has been rightly emphasised by Alvarez when he says," Were they modern poets with an elaborately experimental aesthetics, but borne three and a quarter centuries before their time ? Or were they, like our angry young men, in deliberate revolt against the orthodox establishment ? According to John Heyword, the intellectual element in the metaphysical poetry is the one great secret of the appeal it has for modern readers. F.R. Leavis thinks that the originality of Donne is the key-note of his modernity or contemporaenity.

T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats, the two most prominent poets of the twentieth century, have been deeply influenced by Donne, and this influence is evident not only in their admiration for the poetical achievements of Donne but also in their efforts to imbibe certain aspect of Donne's style and manner in their own poetic craft. Eliot's whole emphasis is upon experience, and he seems to be praising metaphysical poets for exploring, illuminating and relating the greatest possible variety and complexity of individual experience — praising them, in fact, for doing what the modern poets ought to be doing. For to him, as to many others, the chief characteristic of the modern world, of modern life, is its complexity and unintelligibility and the chief function and duty of a modern poet is to introduce or to enable us to perceive some order and meaning and relationship into all this complexity. The example of Milton, Eliot says, cannot help a modern poet to relate love and type-writing, culture and coffee-cups, but the example of Donne, Marvell and others may. In comparison with that mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience' which Eliot found in the metaphysical poets, the sensibilities of Milton, of Dryden, and of most succeeding poets seemed to him simplified, limited and even crude.

15

Victorian Poetry

The Victorian era is marked by great variety and complexity both in the intellectual and physical environment, and by a corresponding confusion of mind and belief. The whole atmosphere of the Victorian world was rapidly becoming an environment in which the old values could not live ——they were withering like the flowers in the smoke-laden atmosphere of the Victorian slum. The most striking characteristic of Victorian literature was its strenuousness, its conscious purpose. Both poets and prose-writers worked under the shadow and burden of a conscious social responsibility. Almost all of them were makers of doctrines, preachers of some crusade, or physicians offering some cure for man's perplexities and despairs. Instead of the light-hearted interest in life which the Elizabethan showed, instead of the revolutionary idealism of the generation of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron, the prevailing mood was an earnest and often troubled facing of the momentous issues of life. There is an element of Romanticism in all the Victorian poets. With many, this remains their strongest and most obvious characteristic. But the spiritual change that has taken place and the atmosphere of a different age give to their art another aspect. The new features are either a more strongly disciplined manner, a more elaborate perfection of the form; or a stringent intellectualism which colours the highest flights of the imagination.

Without entering into controversy, it can be stated that Tennyson was the most representative poet of his age. His works reflect the tendencies, the aspirations and the problems that agitated the minds of men of his age. His was an age of great intellectual ferment when men's mind were excerised upon the deeper problems of human life ——moral, religious and social. He has a distinct message to give to his contemporaries. In "The Princess" the poet has undertaken to grapple with one of the rising questions of the day——that of the higher education of women and their place in the fast changing conditions of society. In 'The Palace of Art', the poet describes and condemns the spirit of aestheticism whose sole religion is the worship of beauty, and which ignores human responsibility and obligations to one's fellowmen. In "In Memoriam" the poet traces the triumph of faith and love over death and of hope over doubt.

While Romanticism had tended rather to lay stress on spontaneity of feeling, Tennyson deliberately emphasised the importance of discipline in form. He is an indefatigable, conscientious, and meticulous artist. His poems, after going through successive revisions, are sometimes hardly recognizable, and almost always closer to perfection. Tennyson still remains a great poet, even though he may not have been a great thinker, nor a master of passion, nor of character, nor of long narrative. For he has other gifts, supreme gifts, of eye and ear. He is a great landscape-painter, and a great musician. He is the poet of perfect phrase.

Browning's poetry is intensely charged with moral purpose. The world is for him, in Keats's phrase, 'the Valley of Soul-making'; and every act, thought, and feeling of life is of concern only as it hinders or determines the soul on its course. He is like Shakespeare in the absolute centring of his interest in humanity, and Shakespearian in his understanding of the weak, the erring and the self-deceived. His theatre is the human spirit, his great subject the soul's development. The regular dramas are failure because the interest in the plot is sacrified to inquiry into motive. What men aspire to be and what they are is a proper subject for discussion, but the stage demands action. Consequently, he found the medium in the dramatic monologue, where the subject's case could be presented from the inside. Browning's main idea is to throw light upon the realm of consciousness, and to do this he frees himself from all the shackles which impede psycho-logical analysis. He gives free vent to his imagination, roams through time and space, and selects in history and among the intense possibilities of life whatever case attracts him: the common feature of all the characters chosen being the inherent complexity which they possess, and which they realize themselves, or offer as a rich material to be exploited by the scrutinizing eye that can read them more clearly.

But his work is not an impartial mirror of reality. There is always some moral preoccupation in his psychology. If he is describing souls that are steeped in vice and in crime, he cannot suppress a strong repugnance which breaks out in the words he lends them, and secretly shapes their discourses ..... His pages radiate impassioned preferences. Moreover, he lacks in dramatic sense. Most of the Browning's figures are very much like himself; he stands in their skins, not in their shoes, in consequence, as a dramatist, he is no Shakespeare.

Browning's language is rugged and unmusical. He is the Carlyle of English poetry. He is indeed one of those writers who treat language not as a musical instrument, needing delicacy no less than power in its handling, but rather as an iron bar which they are to twist and tangle in an exhibition of their powers as professional strong men. Though many critics have tried to brush away the charge of obscurity levelled against Browning's poetry, but the fact remains that he is obscure.

Browning becomes worth hearing when he turns from his preaching to catch the leap of a lover's pulse or the answering flush on a girl's face. He is to be remembered as a poet of love. To him love is the supreme experience and function of the soul, testing its temper and revealing its probable fate. In such poem as "The Last Ride Together", "My star", "By the Fireside", and many other poems, he has presented love in its varied phases and has celebrated its manifold meanings not only on earth but in the infinite range of worlds through which he believes that the soul is determined to go in search after its own perfection.

Driven to the pen by a rational impulse, he does not transform his impulse in the very act of creative invention. What is given to us is merely the product of his intelligence, in a form of insufficient elaboration and artistic polish.

The poetry of Matthew Arnold represented its age in a far profounder way. Here is the true voice of the sensitive Victorian intellectual, brooding over inevitable loss of faith and the meaning of life. Arnold, like Hamlet, was born in times that worked out of joint, and, like the Prince of Denmark, must have many a time uttered to himself——"cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!" Too individualistic to be universal, too self-conscious to be self forgetful, too humane to be a finished stoic, too sceptical to be hopeful, too critical to be superbly creative, too susceptible to surrounding atmosphere to rise above it, too restless to be peaceful, too pre-occupied with contemporary troubles and turmoil to concentrate on that which is fundamental and universal——Arnold is essentially the poet of his own age affected deeply by the contending contemporary intellectual and religious ideas, the illogical confusion of men's minds, and the harassing nature of their practice, broken hopes and palsied hearts. Standing, as he says,

Between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,

he fronts life wearily. The true note of Arnold's temperament is sadness : a pensive melancholy, essentially Romantic in origin, which gains sterner tones from the more definite anxieties of the century.

Almost all Arnold's poetry was written during his young manhood. The few pieces of later date are for the most part resuscitations of earlier moods. The poems are generally variations upon the themes of youthful anguish and aspirations. His finest poems are reveries, profoundly personal and introspective. In verse he rarely assumes the function of the teacher and guide. He feels the need for a new social order but is powerless to suggest the way. This critical and melancholy ineffectuality reveals his spiritual kinship to Clough. In harmony with the prevailing mood is the chill aloofness of his treatment of subjects which have given other poets the opportunity for passionate expression. "Marguerite" is a fading memory ; the

lovers in the church of Brou lie in their tombs ; even the story Tristram focuses sympathy not upon the lover but upon the widow and of her children.

The spirit of the age worked on Arnold in two different ways. Sometimes it drove him away from men and the world to the silent cathedral of Nature and to the sanctuary of his own soul. The poetry that has resulted out of this mood has a strange passion, a magnanimous air and an illuminated distinctiveness. But he could not remain in that mood for long. He fled from solitude to the multitude, from the silence of his soul to the sorrow of men, from the calm of his mind to the confusion of the world. These two opposite moods met and mingled often in his poems —— sometimes even in one and the same poem ; and it is this that gives a peculiar distinction to his poetry.

Though his poetry is permeated with romantic sensibility, yet it is marked by the self-control of the classically disciplined intelligence. Under the direct influence of Hellenism, he formed an ideal of sober and pure simplicity, and made it the constant model of his style. With this purity, Arnold combined the serious note of deep reflection which was his as well. His poetry bears the stamp of intellectualism ; and no writer better represents the new character of the Victorian age in its contrast with the Romantic period. In Arnold's days the poet acquired a certain modesty and reserve ; he could modulate his voice and discipline his song, while his intelligence like a prism modified his passion. To him the wilder disorder of Romanticism should be replaced by a clear architecture, the design of which should be borrowed from the classical writers, the masters of a supreme sense of balance. Arnold's poetry reflects vividly this tendency.

D.G. Rossetti is another prominent poet of the Victorian age. His work illustrates perfectly the romantic tendency to escape from the actual world. His love poetry has a quality unique in English literature. It achieves a subtle synthesis of almost oriental sensuousness, emotional intensity and spiritual elevation. Because for him flesh and spirit were virtually indistinguishable, he wrought a more perfect fusion of sensuousness and spirituality than any other English poet had achieved since Donne.

As a whole, Rossetti's poetry is marked by a great picturesqueness and visual beauty. It is "painter's poetry" ; its appeal is constantly to the eye. Music it has, too, but the tendency to load itself with elaborate detail often defeats the music, and makes of the verse a kind of poetical tapestry, stiff with emblazened images. Where it is not the poetry of a painter, it is the poetry of a prisoner and a recluse. Outdoor nature and the common life of men seldom appear in it. In the main, its atmosphere is close and heavily perfumed, its emotions somewhat morbid and cloying. It is the poetry of a nature born for the generous sunlight and colour of Italy, and compelled to build a dream-world amid the chill, fog and bitter smoke of London.

William Morris's poetry has the air of a pastiche. His poetry is for the most part a succession of pictures, forming a vista of great and

seemingly inexhaustible wealth. They are drawn from every point of the human horizon, from the past as from the present ; but perhaps mostly from the lands of legendary or mysterious beauty. But in spite of their variety, there is one general quality which is common to them all, and that is their romantic colouring. They all seem to weave themselves into a vast tapestry, an ornamental decoration of artistic beauty, wrought by an imagination that is enthralled by the phantasmagoria of the ages. Morris always wrote with taste and craftsmanship ; he never shocks, but often bores. A happy and practical man, he lived without inner conflicts or tension, and his passionless verse has a dream-like quality which was perhaps its chief appeal, and of which he was well aware.

In Swinburne we have Romanticism gone to seed : instead of sincerely felt emotion, there is a whipping-up of spurious passion : instead of picturesque but concrete diction enriched by objective personal observation, there is a sort of frothy exuberance of words and rhythm for their own sake, the language encrusted with archaism and alliteration, the rhythm breathless and unremitting. He, like Tennyson and Browning, was an eclectic, drawing material from every store house. More than any other poet, he took his themes and inspiration directly from literature. He tried to make literature out of literature. The nightingale in him died of too much midnight oil. His plays and his narrative poems lack knowledge of human nature ; his characters talk like archangels, but they do not live or feel or act like men and women. His work has indeed the typical defects of youth——want of experience, and judgment, of proportion and restraint. It strives and cries ; at times it screeches. Having few ideas, it grows monotonous ; having little knowledge of the heart, it lacks compassion. Brilliant and hard, it reflects the light of life with a glare like polished brass ; with all its music, it is often brass to the ear : it is sometimes, in its taste, brass also to the tongue.

The word is omnipotent in Swinburne's poetry ; language breaks through all structural barriers. The stanzaic patterns are invariably impeccable and often marvels of complex ingenuity. But in a larger scenes his poems are often formless. When once the verbal music has begun, there is no logical reason why it should ever cease : the only end is the end of exhaustation. The fact can easily be put to experimental test, that any stanza or scattered groups of stanzas may be omitted without loss of any, save a quantitative, effect. No developing sequence of emotions and ideas is interrupted by such excisions. His diffuseness and over-ornamentation result his tendency to clothe trivial thoughts in sweeping and resounding phrase.

Coventry Patmore is another poet of this era. From an early age, he developed a tendency to spiritual refinement, and associated it with the theme of conjugal love. In the flights of his imagination, he combines an ardour and an eagerness which can transfigure the realities of the home ; but such flights are regrettably short. His diction shows delicacy, and his verse is skilfully adapted to subjects sometimes of the simplest order ; but he does not always avoid a false

elegance of style, a prosaic form of exgression, the abuse of broken cadences ; in trying to weave a poetic halo round the familiar aspects of middle-class life, he is courageous enough, but too often his talent cannot rise above the mediocre atmosphere of his subject.

Besides being a novelist, Hardy was also a poet. Much poetry is merely "day-dreaming" made immortal by the magic power of words. But with Hardy it is different ; it is not a dream that he seems to bring before us, but a vision ; not some vista remote from the reality we live in, but a vision of that reality more vivid than our own. He does not come to create illusions, but to destroy them ; indeed he makes us realize how much illusion we have to cling to in our daily life in order to go on living it. The truth of his poetry is ruthless : its only comfort lies in the tenderness of its sensitive imagination and the splendour of its quiet sincerity.

He never needed to employ the fantastic passions, the remotely strained psychology of more romantic writers. He deliberately took for his subjects the commonest and most natural feelings; but with an unfamiliar insight which only sensitiveness and sympathy can possess. This sympathy is important ; for if truthfulness is one main feature of Hardy's work, its compassion is another. Without that, the bitter truth in his pages might seem too bitter, the irony too sardonic ; but that pity which he found so wanting in universe, crowns his own work with perfect things like "Tess's Lament."

Hardy's diction has a peculiarity of its own. Neither ideas on the one hand nor words on the other, have dominated him ; we have the feeling that the poet has found the perfect outwared form for an inward state of mind.

The poetry of A.E. Housman is sometimes linked with that of Hardy on the grounds that each represents in his way Victorian pessimism. Housman was a poet of limited range and small output, whose deeply melancholy temperament and classical sense of form were combined with an oddly historic streak. It was the historic streak that so often threatened the integrity of his poetry : when he controlled it he could handle his few but elemental themes with memorable eloquence.

Mrs. Browning and Clough also belong to this era. Mrs. Browning's poetry has none of her husband's strength and verbal precisions ; it is highly emotional, sometimes embarrassingly personal in tone, and drawn on conventional poetic images and diction. Yet it has individuality. Arnold's friend Arthur Hugh Clough is perhaps the most perfect example of the poets of the Victorian era seeking in vain for moral and metaphysical certainties. He is one of those writers who solicit the reader's sympathy by the power of a sincere and lofty thought, but as an artist he is incomplete. The fact that his work remains the cult of a discreet and restricted circle of admirers, shows how great an appeal can be made to the English mind by strength of character and the frank discussion of moral problems. To those consciences which are free from prejudice but not from uneasiness he speaks in a somewhat austere, but direct language ; and it is enough.

16 The English Lyric

In Europe, the lyric started with the Greeks. It was the tradition among the Greeks to divide their songs into two classes ; melic or lyric poetry and choric poetry. Lyric poetry was mainly the outcome of personal feeling and centred round an individual singer's emotion to the accompaniment of the lyre. In contrast to lyric poetry stood the choric poetry, which represented some strong communal feeling and was composed for choral singing, supplemented by instrumental harmony and possibly appropriate dance movements. As time passed on, lyric poetry became a comprehensive genre of literature.

The lyric even among the ancient Greeks had certain characteristics besides its music, which have persisted to the present day. These are (*a*) subjectivity and (*b*) unity of impression.

Subjectivity is considered by many competent critics to be the ultimate test of lyric as distinguished from epic, ballad, or purely narrative poetry, and whether or not it is wise to make subjectivity the final court of appeal, its presence in all the finest lyrical verses cannot be denied. The lyric poet, under the impulse of an inner inspiration, is moved by some mysterious feeling and sings as the lark sings, instinctively and untaught. Much of the poetry is suffused with the individuality of the writer. Directly or indirectly he reveals his presence in a poem ; his feelings vitalize it ; his mood colours it ; his own thoughts, experiences and ideals constitute its matter ; it becomes, in a way, a mirror of the poet. In a highly composite poetic literature, it is, of course, impossible to make the distinction between subjective and objective poetry the sole basis of classification, for personal and impersonal elements are frequently mingled ; but, on the whole, it is true to say that epic, ballad, and dramatic poetry belong to the objective division, while the lyric almost monopolises the subjective variety. One critic has rightly defined lyric as "a single emotion temperamentally expressed in terms of poetry."

Another distinguishing mark of a lyric is its unity : it is self-contained, and everything within it is directly related to one central idea. Palgrave holds "lyrical" to imply that each poem shall turn

which the lyric had been panting during the puritanic rigours of the commonwealth period. Didactic, descriptive and satiric verse took the place of the varied lyrical kinds of the Elizabethan period.

The early eighteenth century was, for various reasons, not a lyric period. Life centred in the city and was valued there not for romantic possibilities that later poets and story-tellers had discovered, but for its material comforts, its fellowship and interchange of opinions, its emphasis on rules and fashions in matters of taste. Reasonableness and restraint took the place of vigorous emotions, which were under cloud since the Puritan outburst. Science, politics and philosophy stifled imagination in English minds. Self-consciousness brought ridicule into literature with renewed power. Poetry came to mean the treatment of any subject, no matter how dull and unimaginative, in machine-like stanzas or a long procession of mechanically constructed heroic couplets with language that was beautifully vague and unreal.

The Romantic Revival heralded the birth of the new atmosphere in which the pure lyric could breathe freely, and grow to its full stature. With the advent of the Romantic School, the lyric entered upon the latest and in many respects the highest stage of its career, for, though not all the Romantics poets possessed the lyrical gift to the same extent, in Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats——to mention only the finest—— it attained a most inspired height. Their excellence seems to have been due to two things. In the first place, they perceived, in a higher degree, perhaps, than even the Elizabethans had done, the music latent in words, and succeeded in producing in their poetry, by means of happy combinations of words and rhythms, effects similar to those produced by music itself. Secondly, they appreciated the delicate balance subsisting between subject and form.

Shelley is the greatest of the lyrical poets during the Romantic age. In none of Shelley's contemporaries is the lyrical faculty so paramount, and in none the singing note so well marked as in his lyrics :

> *"From rainbow clouds there flow not*
> *Drops so bright to see,*
> *As from thy presence showers a rain of melody".*

What Shelley says of the skylark is applicable to Shelley himself. His lyrics are marked with spontaneity, rush and impetuosity, emotional ecstasy, intensity, simplicity and throbbing melody. Keats is also a musical artist in words, and lines like

> *Charm d magic casement opening on the foam*
> *Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.*
> *Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell*
> *To toll me back from these to my sole self*

make their appeal to us as much by the lingering fascination of their music as by the exquisiteness of their pictorial suggestion.

Tennyson is by far the greatest of the Victorian lyric poets. During the long span of his poetic career, he produced such fine pieces as "Mariana ; Oriana ; Break-Break-Break ; Lotos Eaters ; Tears : Ideal Tears ; O Swallow, Swallow". All these lyrics of Tennyson are highly melodious, though they may be lacking in the intensity of feeling and emotion. He may not be the master of passions ; but surely he is the master of poetic technique.

The Pre-Raphaelite poets, Rossetti, Morris and Swinburne, imparted a new warmth to the lyric. Swinburne is melodious to a fault, and his lyrics exhibit his sensuousness and love for nature.

The twentieth century has produced quite a good number of lyrical poems. Hardy's lyrics are stiff and resemble the work of the philosophical lyrists of the seventeenth century. His lyrics lack flexibility and embody a life's experience in a few words. The lyrics of Robert Bridges are better than Hardy's, and have been written on the subject of love and nature. But Bridges as a lyric poet is not very great for he lacks the force, fire and intensity of Shelley's lyrics. W.B. Yeats sings of dreamy things with ease and his poetry is replete with musical quality. The lyrics of Yeats are concerned with "ancient things and the stuff of dreams" and are coloured by mysticism of the symbolic poets.

The future does not hold out very high hopes for the lyric, unless some poet like Shelley is born to bestow lyric with warmth, gusto, force and melody.

17 The English Ode

The ode is a lyric poem which expresses exalted or enthusiastic emotion in respect of a theme which is dignified, and it does so in a metrical form which is as a rule complex or irregular. Sir Edmund Gosse defines it as "any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme."

An ode is expected to show an unusually free flow of feeling and imagery. It is often in the form of an address, elevated in tone and style.

Parosodists have distinguished the odes as Regular or Irregular. The regular odes are written after the pattern of Pindar They follow a uniform metrical scheme. The irregular odes are characterized by a lack of uniformity in the length of lines and stanzas.

Pinder, the Greek poet, is the greatest writer of odes in antiquity ; because of the sublime and soaring qualities of his poetry, he is compared to an eagle. Among the Romans, Horace is the most accomplished writer of odes ; his imaginative flight or rapture is less than that of Pindar, but he excels in grace and elegance.

The first English odes are written by Spenser. His "*Epithalamion*" and "*Phothalamion*" follow the middle course between the regular and irregular odes. '*Epithalamion*' is the most magnificent lyric ever penned as love triumphant. Its style ranges from utter simplicity to highly wrought and coloured imagery. In amplitude and splendour it excels all other compositions of the same kind. "*Prothalamion*" is more objective in approach, as it celebrates the marriage of another person. It is an elaborate bridal song and is filled with smooth images and harmonious lines, thought it is devoid of the personal emotions which characterize "*Epithalamion.*"

Spenser's influence is discernible in Milton's fine and stately ode "*On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.*" This ode is a dignified lyric. It celebrates the birth of Christ. It is regarded as one of the most beautiful odes in the English language. Its sublimity of thought and splendour of imagery are remarkable.

Abraham Cowly's odes have drifted into the grove of the Metapysical; they are full of "conceits, hyperboles, antithesis copied from Donne." His odes are a curious hybrid between the early freedom of the Elizabethans and the classicism of the later generation.

The next notable writer of odes in the seventeenth century is Dryden. His best known odes are "*Song for St. Cecilia's Day*" and "*Alexander's Feast*", written for the anniversary in 1697. These odes show Dryden as a master of melodious verse and of a varied and powerful style.

Among the pre-romantics, Gray and Collins have written remarkable odes. Gray has written two great Pindaric odes, "*The Progress of Poetry*" and "*The Bard*". These odes are important landmarks in his poetic development for they represent that romantic element in his poetry which culminated in the "*Descent of Odin*" and "*The Fatal Sisters*." Another important ode of Gray, though not written in the Pindaric style, is "*Hymn to Adversity.*" The '*Hymn to Adversity*' may be compared with Wordworth's "*Ode to Duty.*" It suggests the idea of a stern course as a beneficial one and praises severity. It is a noble poem, fine in conception, and clear in expression, and its only blot is the use of personification which gives it an air of artificiality.

These odes of Gray have been variously estimated. Dr. Johnson says of these Pindaric odes : "These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please ; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. He has a kind of strutting dignity and is tall by walking upon tiptoe His art and his struggle are visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature " Modern criticism has, however, shown that views of Dr. Johnson are not just and appropriate.

In sheer lyrical genius and emotional fervour, however, Collins is superior to Gray. His famous odes are : *Ode to Evening*, *Ode to Simplicity*, *Ode to Pity*, and *Ode to Fear*. Some of these odes are outweighted with the cumbrous, creaking machinery of the Pindaric, but the best of them, especially the *Old to Evening*, are instinct, with a sweet tenderness, a subdued and shadowy pathos and a magical enchantment of phrase.

The ninenth century had produced some of the greatest inspired ode writers of England. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley have written excellent odes. Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimation of Immortality*, is perhaps, the most widely appreciated of his odes. It is irregular in form and its eleven stanzas embrace varying rhythm and playful rhymes. It has been written, as C. M. Bowra suggests, as a kind of answer to Coleridge's *Dejection Ode*, or a least to the doubts and anxieties which prompted it. But, of course, it is much more than this. It enshrines Wordsworth's philosophy of prenatal

existence and his belief in immortality of the human soul. "*Ode to Duty*" is more formal and more regular than the *Immortality Ode*. In style as well as in thought, it has affinities with the classical school of poetry.

Coleridge has written several odes, but two of them are very important. *Dejection, an Ode* and *France, an Ode*, the latter of which Shelley declared to be the finest ode of modern time. In this ode, Coleridge has retracted his earlier faith in the French Revolution, and in the *Dejection Ode* he gives expression to :

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear.

The *Immortality Ode* and the *Dejection Ode* make an interesting comparison. Both of them "are concerned with central problems in the Romantic outlook and show to what different conclusions two men could come who shared their innermost thoughts and followed, as they believed, very similar aims."

Shelley's achievement in the realm of ode is perhaps greater than that of Wordsworth and Coleridge. His famous odes are : *To a Skylark* and *Ode to the West Wind*. These odes are unsurpassed in their imagery and sheer lyrical quality. Bagehot describes *To a Skylark* as 'a clear ring of penetrating melody,' and a more suitable phrase is hard to find. *The Ode to the West Wind* is also a great lyric which unfolds like a symphony. Its thought, emotion, imagery, verse, diction and movement play into each other with such magisterial harmony that it has been rightly called "the lyric of lyrics."

The Romantic ode finds its culmination in Keats. Keats may be called the prince among the English ode-writers. His great odes are six in number : *Old to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to Psyche*, *Ode to Autumn*, *Ode to Melancholy* and *Ode on Indolence*. Keeping strictly to the tradition of the Ode, all these odes of Keats are serious in tone and temperament, grave in their matrical cadence and elaborate in style. They are grave, impassioned lyrics of different serious moods. They are surcharged with a haunting melody and rich with intensely imaginative expressions.

The odes of Keats are distinguised by their poignancy of feeling, their richly meditative texture, their solemn splendour of imagery, and their flawless workmanship. The are remarkable for their Hellenic clarity, their chiselled beauty, and their inevitable poetic afflatus. They surprise us with their brooding sweetness, their long-drawn out melody, and their glorious independence. No wonder, therefore, that Prof. De Selincourt goes in raptures over them and says that "in the odes he (Keats) has no master; and their indefinable beauty is so direct and so distinctive an effluence of his soul that he can have

do disciple." His odes are above criticism——— they are pure gold of poetry.

The Victorian age is usually regarded as deficient in excellent odes. Tennyson and Swinburne have written many odes. But their compositions do not possess any special charm and quality.

During the twentieth century may poets have composed odes ; but, generally speaking, the modern age is not suited for the ode. Hopkin's "*Ode on the Wreck of Deutschland*" is an ecclesiastical ode presenting the loss of a German ship with five nuns on boards. It is in a new metrical form. Watson has written "*Ode on the Coronation of Edward VII*". But this ode lacks in the vitality of a literary diction.

The literature of the twentieth century does not hold out a rich harvest of odes, and we will have to wait for the birth of another Keats in our times who would once again give to the ode the glory and triumph which it had enjoyed in his times.

18 Epic Poetry

Epic poetry is one of the oldest form that has come down to us from the ancients. Though Aristotle in his "Poetics" and Horace in his "*Art of Poetry*" relegated epic poetry to a subordinate place giving the palm of eminence to tragedy, yet the supremacy of epic poetry could not be shaded. Epic poetry enjoyed its heyday in ancient Greece and Rome, when Homer, Virgil, Tasso and Ariosto practised this art and composed epic poems on heroic dimensions. In England, epic poetry was brought to dizzy heights of eminence by Milton.

An epic is a long narrative poem dealing with heroic achievements and eternal human problems in a style marked with seriousness, earnestness and dignity. In the words of Gayley, "an epic is a dispassionate recital in dignified rhythmic narrative of a momentous theme or action fulfilled by heroic characters and supernatural agencies under the control of a sovereign destiny." Dixon describes the epic "as a narrative poem, organic in structure, dealing with great characters and great actions in a style commensurate with the lordliness of its theme which tends to idealize these characters and actions and to sustain and embellish its subject by means of episode and amplification."

Generally it has been claimed that the epic poet should choose the subject of his epic from ancient times and remote ages. By following the past, the poet will enjoy greater freedom. He will ecape the bondage of facts of well known history. and have freedom to expand his wings. Lucan, however, has preferred themes and characters of recent history. Tasso has steered the middle course and has advised a subject neither too old nor too new.

Whether the subject of the epic is chosen from ancient or modern times, the action of the epic and its plot is characterised by greatness of scope and dignity of style. The action of an epic is usually spacious and is worked out into majestic proportions. Amplitude, breadth and inclusiveness are its essential qualities. It is allowed a latitude in time that is denied to tragedy ; its only limit in this respect being the power of human imagination to grasp it as connected and completed development.

The action of epic poetry is governed by the ideal of unity. In the words of Upham, "there must be one organic action in epic as in tragedy, distinctly arising out of the apparent dead level of commonplace, moving irresistibly though its curve of progress and sinking once more into placidity at the end,——the beginning, middle and end "of Aristotle's theory." There is always a single action in an epic poem though the poet is allowed to introduce innumerable episodes as long as they are made relevent to the main action. But it must concern itself with one dominating figure of a hero. However certain romantic epics have admitted "many actions of men."

Next comes the question of the hero and the main characters of the epic. The hero of the epic poetry should be a man of immaculate and pure character endowed with noble and great feelings. Dryden, however, disagrees with this view and cites the example of Achilles, the main figure of Iliad, as the example of a hero who is neither all pure nor all good. He is cruel to his enemy and the sale of Hector's body to his father Priam is not a generous act. In spite of Dryden's criticism of the immaculate ideal, it has been conceded that the hero ought to be a man of virtues and should strive towards the attainment of perfection in life.

Supernatural characters and supernatural machinery can also be introduced in epic poetry and has been employed with dexterity by the classical epic poets. Dryden defends the supernatural machinery in the epic and states : "I am of opinion that neither Homer, Virgil, Statius, Ariosto, Tasso, nor our English Spenser could have formed their poems half so beautiful without those gods and those spirits and those enthusiastic poets of poetry which compose the most noble parts of their writings." Bishop Hard defends Tasso's supernatural machinery, and states ; "I stick to my point and maintain that the fairy tales of Tasso do him more honour than what are called the more natural and classical parts of the poem."

All the critics agree that an epic poem, like a drama, should have probability, and that within its larger bounds and less realistic medium things less probable can be made to appear probable than is the case with dramatic pieces. In epic we can have 'probable impossibilities' rather than 'improbable possibilities'. Most of the incidents and characters in epic are not only probable but possible, and while reading epic or drama we do not pause to reflect——"This could never happen in real life."

The style of epic poetry is majestic, stately and dignified. Dignity and sublimity are the hall-marks of epic style. Lofty epic characters express themselves in a style commensurate with their loftiness. The impression of triviality should never be allowed to lower the dignity of the epic. Blank verse is generally accepted as the most effective medium of expression in epic poetry.

Homer in Greece and virgil in Italy are rightly considered as the pioneers of epic poetry. '*Iliad*' and '*Odyssey*' are based on the legend

of Trojan war, and are the oldest work of European literature. '*Iliad*' is the story of the wrath of Achilles told against the background of the seige of Troy. '*Odyssey*' is concerned with the achievements of Ulysses, a hero of the ideal type, surpassing Achilles in eloquence, suavity and culture. In each poem the action is serious, dignified and of considerable magnitude. Each has a definite beginning and an equally definite end, and the various events follow each other in an orderly fashion, maintaining the organic unity of the whole.

The Homeric example was followed by Virgil in Italy. Virgil has been regarded as "the moon of Homer". In '*Aeneid*', he concentrates on the heroic deeds of Aeneas, and exhibits artistic craftsmanship in the presentation of his achievements.

English epic poetry has considerably been influenced by the pattern and tradition of the classical example, as it was left behind by Homer, Virgil, Tasso and Ariosto. Of these classical poets, Virgil exercised the greatest influence on English epic, and the greatest of English epic poems, *Paradise Lost*, was written under the influence of Virgil.

The first attempt at the composition of an epic poem in English quite in the style of Italian romance was made by Spenser. '*Faerie Queene*' is a peculiar kind of epic, in which we may discern moral threads and allegories, presented in juxtaposition with romantic and adventurous exploits of its heroes and heroines. The '*Faerie Queene*' is sweeping in its scope and has been planned to envelope the Platonic doctrines, the Aristotelian ethics and the politics and patriotism of the day. In this epic, unity of effect is destroyed by the plenthora of episodes and detailed descriptions and the poem is "a sort of epic poetry unheard of before" containing a "unity of design, and not of action."

Epic poetry attains its pinnacle of glory in the hands of John Milton, who has rightly been recognised as the English Virgil in epic poetry. Milton has written two poems, '*Paradise Lost*' and '*Paradise Regained*'.

'*Paradise Lost*' is based on classical conventions established by Virgil. Its theme is the fall of man, and the poet makes it clear in the opening lines :

> *Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit*
> *Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste*
> *Brought death into the world, and all our woe,*
> *With loss of Eden, till one greater Man*
> *Restore us, and regain us the blissful seat.*

Referring to the greatness of the theme of this epic, W.I. Long remarks : "It will be seen that this is a colossal epic, not of a man or a hero but of the whole race of man, and that Milton's characters are such as no human hand could adequately portray." This epic handles

a subject which is concerned with the human race. The themes, has been presented by the poet in a stately and dignified manner. The scenes, the splendours of heaven, the horrors of hell, the serene beauty of paradise, the sun and planets suspended between celestial light and gross darkness are pictured with a lofty imagination. It attempts "things unattempted in prose or rime." The unity of construction is as remarkable here as in Milton's model, '*Aeneid*. '*Paradise Lost*' is a great poem to us because it develops in artistic unity one great imaginative conception, and abounds throughout its course in daring flights of fancy into unknown regions. In this repect it is always to be classed with Dante's '*Divine Comedy*'.

'*Paradise Regained*' is mainly concerned with the discomfiture of Satan and triumph of Christ and the biblical theme is set forth with a puritan's zeal to uphold Christianity against paganism. It is inferior to '*Paradise Lost*' in splendour, magnificience and flights of imagination.

The eighteenth century witnessed a parody of heroic poetry in Pope's "*The Rape of the Lock*". The classical period was, in fact, the golden age of parody. Fielding's "*Traged of Tom Thumb*" and Gray's "*Begger's Opera*" were burlesques of dramatic forms. Swift's "*Gulliver's Travel's*" was a burlesque of the methods of travels. "The true genius of mock heroic lies", as Prof. Courthope says, "in travesting the serious epic, in bringing all the leading features of the epic machinery——lofty incident, character and style——to the exaltation of a trivial subject." Pope exactly follows what Prof: Courthope has hinted in the above lines. He employs all the devices of epic poetry for a trivial theme, namely, the cutting of a lock of hair from Belinda's head by Lord Petre. But out of this trivial theme Pope spins out in a mock-heroic style a poem which Hazlitt called "the perfection of the mock-heroic". The poem abounds in satire on the society of the day, driven home by Pope's favourite trick of grouping the serious and the trivial in unexpected combinations.

Many Romantic poets composed poems in the epical style, but none of them could attain success. Wordsworth's "*The Prelude*" and "*Excursion*" are epical in dimension though not in theme. Keats's '*Hyperion*' is modelled on Milton's '*Paradise Lost*', But he gave up the adventure in sheer disgust for Milton's flights and daring conjurations were beyond his power.

During the Victorian age, Tennyson attempted the fusion of classical epic and old romance in the "*Idylls of the King*." We look in vain here for the technical features of either classical or romantic epic. The unity is a unity of framework rather than an organic unity of all the parts. Matthew Arnold's '*Sohrab and Rustam*' is an epic fragment, describing with all the richness of heroic similes the death of Sohrab at the hands of his father, Rustam. This epic-fragment embodies Arnold's fatalistic attitude towards life and the over-powering force of fate in human affairs.

Hardy's "*The Dynasts*" is an epical drama ; it embodies his vision of destiny and fate. Scott James says : "It is not a story out of which a philosophy emerges, but rather a philosophy unfolded through the tragic events of the story."

The modern age is not very much suited for the production of epic poetry. An heroic age and heroic temper are the "*sine qua non*" of epic poetry; the modern age is not the age of heroism, but of interrogation and scepticism. Further, the epic poet must have patience and leisure at his command. Twenty years is considered by Coleridge as the period required for the composition of epic poetry. The modern poet has neither patience nor leisure to devote all his energy and industry to the production of an epic poem which may not find favours with the public. Moreover, the horizons of human life have widened so vastly that the modern poet cannot include them in his poetic creation, however far-seeing his vision of life may be. Dixon says : "His (poet's) province is not co-extensive with the entire world of man's thoughts and actions."

19

Pure Poetry

What is pure Poetry ? This is a very ticklish and intricate question. According to Bradley, in pure poetry the poet deals not with the acutual experience he has got of the world, but with the experience which has passed through his imagination, and has been given a new and more potent shape. This imaginative experience in pure poetry does not appeal directly to the imagination of the reader, as actual experience of the world does, but to his 'contemplative imagination', which is, of course, saturated with the 'real experience' of the world.

Further, in pure poetry one cannot separate the form from the substance——both form a unity. In pure poetry, it is impossible to say whether its greatness is due to the high value of the subject it deals with, or the beauty of its form. "This identity of content and form is no accident ; it is of the essence of poetry, and of all art in so far as it is art."

Pure poetry has a perfect style. We cannot change or displace even a word of it without doing an immense harm. Arnold says, "The words are symbols equivalent with the things symbolised." In simple words, the form is identical with its content. Hence in true poetry, it is, in strictness, impossible to express the meaning in any but its own words, or to change the words without changing the meaning.

As with words and phrases, so is with versification. In pure poetry, versification is also perfect. Referring to the importance of versification in poetry, Sir Edmund Gosse has observed in his essay, "*Appreciation of poetry*" : "The poet is distinguished by writing in verse or metre. This is his medium, as oil or water-colour is the medium of a painter, and clay or marble that of a sculptor. Sidney says : "It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet." If he meant it in the sense in which he might have said, "It is not brushes and a palette that make a painter', we can fully endorse his dictum ; but if he meant that a man could be a poet and not write in verse, he uttered a dangerous although a common paradox."

Another characteristic of pure poetry is that it is highly suggestive. Bradley has observed : "About the best poetry, there floats

an atmosphere of infinite suggestion. The poet speaks to us of one thing, but in this one thing there seems to lurk the secret of all. He says what he means ; but his meaning seem to beckon away beyond itself, or rather to expand into something boundless which is only focussed in it ; something also which, we feel, would satisfy not only the imagination, but the whole of us."

Bacon observes that while Science is a subjecting of mind to things art is subjecting of things to the mind. The pure poet knows they way not of subjection but of supremacy, the way of imaginative art. He tries to seek consolation and delight in the recreating of the world, in grasping the sorry scheme of things, and remoulding it to the heart's desire. This is the criterion of pure poetry, that it touches the universal longing for a perfect world, which Yeats describes in *The Lake of Innisfree*"——

"And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes drooping slow,
Drooping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings ;
Their midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wing.
I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore ;
While I stand on the roadway or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's care.

This longing which, in one way or another, is the inspiration of all the passionate moments of great poetry, is not merly an escape, a refuge, an oblivion. It is a longing for a real transformation of life, a transformation of a world of good and evil into a world of unalloyed beauty. Pure poetry is the expression of the poet's imaginative experience which is universal, so that every one can share it, in the most suitable form and in the best verification. It has a world of its own, different from the real world, which may be called the "poetic world."

The poetic world is a world without prejudice. The writ of those moral and practical judgments which we feel compelled to exercise elsewhere, does not run here. We have even left behind those judgments as to reality and unreality without which Macbeth, on the brink of his crime, alarms us with the fear that his wickedness may not succeed. This is the world in which the villainy of Iago delights us with its refinement and resource. This is the world in which Ariel and Titania, Polyphemus and Fanfair, Satan and Prometheus, are figures which we accept as easily as the man next door ; and the instant we ask ourselves whether such figures really exist or can exist,

we are aware that in the very act of asking that question we have come clean out of the world of poetry.

In order to enable poetry to exist in individual self-sufficiency, the poet must add to the technique of diction the technique of form. This simply means that, however complex and diverse the things may be which make up the substance of the poem, the meaning of the language which exhibits these things has been so exactly organized that, seconded by the rhythmical continuity of the language, the final impression is one of harmonious unity of all parts. A poem has no form unless everything in it unites into a single complex impression; and in that impression we take, by immediate apprehension, an instance of the world we require ; for it is an impression of many things existing in perfect co-ordination, an impression that everything in the poem is there in assured significance.

Thus pure poetry is something complete in itself. It is not subservient to any outside motive, nor does it try to obtrude itself on the reader. It is unobtrusively beautiful. Keats who himself is a pure poet, and many of whose poems are fine examples of pure poetry, defines poetry in "*Sleep and Poetry*" as :

"*. . . A drainless shower*
Of light is poesy : 'tis the supreme of power,
'Tis might half-slumbering on its own right arm."

Pure poetry, according to Keats, is vital and beautiful with no philosophy to preach. Criticising the poetry of Wordsworth who says that he is nothing if not a teacher, Keats writes in a letter to his friend, Reynolds : "For the sake of a few imaginative or domestic passages are we to be bullied into a certain philosophy engendered in the whim of an egoist ? We hate poetry that has a palpable design on us." In a letter to Taylor, Keats has enunciated his famous axiom concerning poetry : "I think poetry should surprise us by a fine excess, and not by singularity ; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost remembrance."

These are the manifold qualities which are expected in poetry, which is pure, true and great, and that is why pure poetry is so rare.

DRAMA

SELECT QUOTATIONS

"A play ought to be a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind."

Dryden

"It will never make any difference to a hero what the laws are. His greatness will shine and accomplish itself unto the end, whether they second him or not."

Emerson

"When the will defies the fear, when duty throws the gauntlet down to fate, when honour scorns to compromise with death— this is heroism."

R.G. Ingersoll

"Tragedy must be something bigger than life, or it would not affect us. In nature, the most violent passions are silent ; in tragedy they must speak, and speak with dignity too."

Lord Chesterfield

"Comedy is a story of various habits and customs of public and private affairs, from which one may learn what is of use in life and what must be avoided."

Aelius Donatus

"Comedy, considered in its essence, represents the forces of life as opposed to the forces of death, the latter, in a greater or less degree, forming the subject of tragedy."

Renee M. Deacon

"It is easy to condemn with a laugh."

Juvenal

"Comedy is the fountain of sound sense."

Meredith

20 Tragedy

Tragedy is that major form of drama which deals with the serious aspects of life and presents man as blundering blindly towards an unhappy end. Aristotle has defined tragedy in a comprehensive way. According to him, "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude ; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, in the form of action, not of narrative ; through pity and fear effecting the proper Katharsis, or purgation of these emotions.'

When Aristotle defines tragedy as an imitation of human action or life, he does not mean by it the slavish copying or transcription of life, but the imaginative reconstruction of life. Tragedy is not divorced from life ; being a product of the poet's imagination, it is rooted human experience. The poet or dramatists represents the truth about human life, and it is this truth, the universal truth, which great tragedy embodies in a beautiful and artistic form.

The second implication of Aristotle's definition is that tragedy deals with the serious aspects of life as opposed to comedy which is concerned with the trivial and ludicrous aspects. Action implies a human individual in action. 'Plot', Aristotle says, is the fundamental thing, the soul of tragedy ; whereas character is secondary. 'This judgment he justifies by an argument not quite worthy of a philosopher. A play, he urges, can be produced without any character-drawing to speak of, but it cannot be produced without a plot ; therefore plot is the main thing. The truth is, surely, that the relative importance of character and plot varies with different dramatists and different national temperaments. To the Greek mind or the French, with their sense of how much more a beautiful whole is than the sum of its parts, Aristotles' view may seem true, and *Oedipus*' and *Athalie* decisive examples of the truth. Whereas the Englishman tends to subscribe rather to the opposite dictum of Vanburgh : "I believe more in character and the diction than in the business and the event." It is the view of Victor Hugo that whereas most of the men in an audience want action, and most of the women want emotion, its thinkers care above all for character.

The tragic hero must have some stature or importance. He should be a man above the average : serious, elevated and dignified. Though not pre-eminent in virtue, he should be good enough to rise above vice or depravity. In other words, he should be not 'a man of flawless perfection, not yet of consummate villainy. Now the question arises whether a wholly innocent person can be the hero of a tragedy, or it is necessary for the hero to have some 'tragic flaw', some weakness or defect of character ? The essentially tragic thing is to be the victim of one's own act, the author of one's proper woe. The theory of '*Hamartia*', expounded by Aristotle, is followed by Hegel. Hegel wants to rationalize tragedy. He has unbounded faith in Reason and wishes that all the things of the world should be understood, explained and justified. There should be no scope for mystery in the tragedy. It must have some reason for it. Hegel finds this reason in the character of the tragic hero himself. He holds him to be responsible for his own fate. There can be no such thing as mere fatality. It is the hero himself who, by some guilty act, some error in judgment, or some defect in nature, creates the events which lead to his ultimate ruin. This theory of Hegel is followed by the German critics, Gervinus Ulrici and J.S. Smart. According to them, tragic flaw (*hamartia* in Aristotle's language) is to lack of insight within the character that results in some catastrophic action. Thus, the possibilities of tragedy lie within human nature itself.

Tragedy is based upon three eternal facts. Firstly, it deals with the fundamental dignity of man which is inherent in his moral and spiritual worth. Secondly, the protagonist possesses freedom of will, and power to select his course of action in life. Thirdly, the final impression tragedy leaves on audience or readers' mind is that man, with all his moral or spiritual forces, with all his initiative and free will, lives under a mysterious power which determines the trend and the final issue of his action. Thus tragedy involves a double vision of human suffering and the "mysterious power." Though the 'mysterious power' is destructive in its immediate effects, yet it affirms that there is some universal order of things existing in the universe. The main problem before a tragic writer is how to adjust this 'mysterious power' with the human suffering. Usually this 'mysterious power' brings the tragic flaw (*hamartia*) of the protagonist into clash with circumstances, and thus produces the catastrophic and dire consequences.

The course of tragedy in the twentieth century has taken a new turn, unheard of in the past. Leaving aside a few tragedies such as '*St. Joan*' by Bernard Shaw and *Abraham Lincoln*' by John Drinkwater, which are historical tragedies, the tragedies produced in our times are 'Social and Domestic Tragedies, popularised by Galsworthy, Barker, O'Casey and John Masefield. Instead of dealing with the lives of great kings and princes, the modern writers concentrate their attention on the tragedies of common men and women living in the sordid atmosphere of a poverty-striken society. The cause of tragedy does

not so much lie in the fatal flaw in the character of the hero, as in the social evils and vices adversely affecting the life of the hero. The society is the villain responsible for the tragedy.

One of the most debated clauses of Aristotle's definition pertains to the function of tragedy, *i.e.*, the proper *catharsis* of the emotions of pity and fear. Aristotle's dictum of *catharsis* has not met with universal favour, since it seems to over-stress the moral and psychological effects of a play. According to Dr. F.R. Leavis, the tragedy has an exalting effect on the minds of the readers or spectators. "We have contemplated a painful action, involving death and the destruction of the good, admirable and sympathetic, and yet instead of being depressed we enjoy a sense of enhanced vitality." Tragedy does not merely arouse, or relieve certain emotions, but it also generates in the more thoughtful spectator overtones of reflective emotion. Referring to this, Thompson has observed in *The Anatomy of Drama* : "In tragedy the thoughtful spectator finds a compensation for the comparative incompleteness of his identification. Since he shares the imagery experience of the protagonist and at the same time preserves "aesthetic distance", he is able to reflect as well as feel. And the consequence of his reflection is often a perception of depths of meaning and value beyond the grasp of simpler minds. But this perception is not coldly intellectual ; it is a result of emotion and a cause of further emotion. Thus tragedy moves us to the impassioned contemplation of the ultimate." In simple words, a great tragedy gives us the impression that life is worth living in spite of its trials and tribulations. What is expected of us is to live it heroically and intensely. It lifts us from our little selves to the heights of power and grandeur.

George Steiner has recently brought out an admirable book, "*The Death of Tragedy*." His main thesis is that the world of today is not favourable to the birth of great tragedy ; tragedy implies a special vision of man and his place in the universe and the modern world has almost lost this vision.

21 Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy

Tragedy is always the outcome of conflict. This proposition is never arraigned. There is always a conflict between man and external forces. But, what is this conflict due to ? Man is not a paragon of perfection. Every man has a tragic flaw (*hamartia*). Fate or chance brings this tragic flaw of man into clash with circumstances. Shakespeare has very aptly remarked :

> *The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,*
> *But in ourselves......"*

Shakespeare's tragic heroes possess certain flaws which drag them to the altar of doom. King Lear is drastic-minded and impetuous ; Macbeth is ambitious ; Hamlet indulges in undue procrastination when situation demands quick and decisive measure ; Othello is credulous. *A.C. Bradley* has made an illuminating statement. He says : "A Shakespearian tragedy may be described as a story of exceptional calamity, leading to the death of a man in high state. But this calamity is not sent from above; it proceeds from the very actions of man." The dictum that with Shakespeare, character is destiny' is no doubt an exaggeration ; but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth. Whereas in Greek tragedies plot is more important than character, in the Shakespearian tragedy character is more dominating than action.

In each of the Shakespeare's tragedies, the story is dominated by one person——the tragic hero. It is only in the love-tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, that the heroine is as much the centre of the action as the hero. The rest, including Macbeth, are single stars. The hero, with Shakespeares, is a person of high degree or of public importance, and his actions or sufferings are of an unusual kind. His nature also is exceptional, and generally raises him in some respects much above the average level of humanity. This does not mean that he is an eccentric or a paragon. Shakespeare never drew monstrosities of virtue, some of his heroes are far from being "good" ; and if he drew eccentrics, he gave them a subordinate position in the plot. His tragic characters are made of

the stuff we find within ourselves and within the persons who surround them. But, by an intensification of the life which they share with others, they are raised above them. Some, like Hamlet and Cleopatra, have genius. Others, like Othello, Lear, Macbeth and Coriolanus, are built on the grand scale and desire, passion or will attains in them a terrible force.

Shakespeare introduces the supernatural in some of his tragedies ; he introduces ghosts and witches who have supernatural knowledge. This supernatural element can't be explained away as an illusion in the mind of one of the characters. And, further, it does contribute the action, and is in more than one instance, an indispensable part of it. It gives a confirmation and a distinct form to inward movements already present and exerting an influence to the sense of failure in Brutus, to the stifled working of conscience in Richard, to the half-formed or the horrified memory of guilt in Macbeth, to suspicion in Hamlet.

Shakespeare, in most of his tragedies, allows to "chance" or "accident" an appreciable influence at some point in the action. Chance or accident means any occurrence (not supernatural, of course) which enters the dramatic sequence neither from the agency of a character, nor from the obvious surrounding circumstances. It may be called an accident, in the sense, that Juliet did not awaken from her long sleep a minute sooner ; an accident that Edgar arrived at the prison just too late to save Cordelia's death ; an accident that Desdemona dropped her handkerchief at the most fatal of moments ; an accident that the pirate ship attacked Hamlet's ship, so that he was able to return forthwith to Denmark. Now this operation of accident is a prominent fact of human life. To exclude it wholly from tragedy would be to overlook the truth.

In his tragedies, Shakespeare often gives us humorous passages of scenes in order to provide relief to the overstrained nerves of the spectators. His comic relief is traditional but more subtle. We laugh at the grave-diggers (*Hamlet*, *Act 5*, *Scene 1*,) before passing to the grave-side meeting of Laertes ; but we steadily suspect from the dialogue that it is Ophelia's grave they are preparing, and so are aware simultaneously of tragedy and comedy. Again in *Macbeth*, the Porter scene is more than 'comic interlude' : its theme and atmosphere are appropriate to a play concerned so deeply with the supernatural and the eternal validity of human choice.

Some critics raise the objection that Shakespearian tragedies lack in poetic justice. Dr. Johnson was very hard upon him for not observing the rule of poetic justice in his tragedies. When we examine these theories with a penetrative eye, we reject them as shallow and lop-sided. When we juxtapose life and Shakespearian tragedies, and cast a critical glance at them, we become mindful of the

fact his tragedies are a "replica" of life. Dryden says, "A drama is a just and lively picture of human nature, representing its passions and humours and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind." Shakespeare's tragedies confirm to this criterion in a very large measure. Poetic justice means that prosperity and adversity are distributed in proportion to the merits and demerits of the agent. Such poetic justice is in flagrant contradiction with the facts of life and is absent from his tragic picture of life. In actual life, culprits are not always punished and the virtuous people are not always rewarded. The emphasis is, however, on the word 'always.' Poetic justice does not exist in our life. What on the earth makes us aspire for its existence in Shakespearian tragedies? Only the lesser dramatist who has not the power of impartiality thinks of poetic justice: Shakespeare, from his high position, reflects the whole universe, and does not attempt to inculcate any petty moral by saving the good characters and destroying the evil; while we feel that he himself has sympathy for the nobility and the grandeur of life, we can hardly say that in Shakespeare's view the gods are on the side of good. The good and the noble in his tragedies exist for themselves, not for any outside god or heavenly power.

A.C. Bradley has scrutinized the issue from technical point-of-view. He says: "When we are immersed in a tragedy, we feel towards dispositions, action, persons, and such emotions as attraction and repulsion, pity, wonder, fear or horror; but we do not judge. This is a point of view which emerges only when, on reading a play, we slip, by our own fault or the dramatist's, from the tragic position; or when, in thinking about the play afterwards, we fall back on our every-day moral and legal notions. But tragedy does not belong to the sphere of these notions." Aristotle also rules out the existence of poetic justice in the tragedy. So we can't level any charge against Shakespeare simply because his tragedies refuse to accommodate "poetic justice."

The salient point to note concerning Shakespeare's conception of tragedy is the fact that he strove to display the themes essentially stirring and often melodramatic, and that his primal thought was dramatic effectiveness. Obviously, however, this is only the outward framework; beyond and within the external sensationalism, Shakespeare has placed a more subtle, a more poetical, and less tangible tragic spirit. The two aspects must at one and the same time be kept distinct and treated together. They run parallel with another coalescing often, yet distinct in their offices.

Some critics judge his plays by Aristotelian rules and find fault with them. For instance, Ben Jonson was hard upon Shakespeare for violating the unities of time and space. But Shakespeare did maintain the unity of action. Shakespeare is not to be judged by Aristotelian rules. He is an institution in himself; his value must be assessed by

what he possess, not by what he lacks. Aristotle derived his rules after reading Greek tragedies ; these rules may not be valid for successor playwrights. Dryden has very aptly remarked : "It is not enough that Aristotle had said so, for Aristotle drew his model of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides ; and if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind". To judge, therefore, Shakespeare by Aristotle's rules is like trying to a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another.

22 Development of the Tragedy

Tragedy is the exhibition of man in unsuccessful conflict, or collision with mighty and invincible forces. But, what is this conflict due to ? Man is not a paragon of perfection. Every man has a tragic flaw (*Hamartia*). Fate or chance brings this tragic flaw of man into clash with circumstances. Shakespeare has very aptly remarked :

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves . . . ."

Tragedy is never one-sided. It never falls into error, common to optimism and pessimism. It never fails to see the resurrection implied in the fall and fall implied in the resurrection.

Tragedy in English literature can be studied in relation to the classical tragedies of Greece and Rome. Aeschylus was the first Greek tragic artist. It is probable that Aeschylus and the other playwright of Greece owed a considerable debt, both for the content and the form of their plays, to priestly performers of sacred dramas in ancient Egypt ; it is certain that Aeschylus was no inventor of tragedy, but merely elaborated upon a growing Greek tradition which gradually brought the theatre as we know it to full fruition. But in all of these realms we move darkling, unable to do more than guess at what may be around us.

In the works of Aeschylus, there appears a grandeur, an elemental strength, that gives to his plays a quality of monumental majesty. In '*The Persians*', he has presented us with a drama at once unique in the annals of the Greek stage because of its adoption of contemporary subject-matter and almost unique in the entire history of the theatre because it succeeds in viewing a stirring contemporary struggle from an almost Olympian height.

In Aeschylus' thought, the relation of God to man was ever paramount. It was, indeed, through this pre-occupation that he succeeded with such power in establishing the tragic forms of drama, for tragedy is in essence the theatrical representation of themes wherein man is

set in relation to the universe. How deeply Aeschylus was obsessed with such considerations is revealed in "*Prometheus Bound.*" This drama, since it showed Prometheus bound by Zeus' order to a crag, presented to the poet a serious problem in dramaturgy, and a measure of Aeschylus' skill is to be found in a consideration of the manner in which he keeps our interest alive in the necessarily static action. Aeschylus wrote many other plays ; the prominent of them being *The Suppliants* and *Seven Against Teebes.*

In these tragedies, it has been noted that dramatic scenes and situations are of stupendous importance. But the art of plotting is in an embryonic stage of development. Dramatic action is still overshadowed by lyric, elegiac and narrative passages.

Aeschylus was obviously a pioneer : he was compelled to forge the very instruments from which his art was fashioned ; and, thus handicapped, he was able to accomplish so much. His position in relation to the theatre of his time bore many parallels to that of Marlowe in the Elizabethan Age. He served as a forerunner to Sophocles, who was more fortunately circumstanced than himself. If Aeschylus is Marlowe ; Sophocles in Shakespeare. As a dramatist, Sophocles benefited much from the pioneering efforts of his predecessor, Aeschylus. Aeschylus had improved the stage : Sophocles improved it further and gave it flexibility. He was the first to provide the persons of tragedies with a defined background. A still more significant step was taken when he discarded the Aeschylean trilogy and substituted therefore separate dramas, each with its own beginning, middle and end, works self-inclusive and self-complete. By taking this step he moved the early theatre vastly nearer the dramatic form of the later Western stage.

In his tragedy, "*Electra*" there is a psychological study such as appears nowhere in any of Aeschylus' works. Despite the high idealization in the treatment of the story, we feel that we have drawn somewhat away from the presence of majesty, that we are coming tremblingly near to the realm of the domestic drama. "*Antigone*" presents what "*Electra*" lacks. In "*Antigone*" there is obviously present a quality the presence of which in "*Electra*" we seek for in vain. Here, too, emphasis is on human character ; although no supernatural beings appear among the other *dramatic personae*, the gods have come mysteriously close to the action. The human persons, together with their actions, are illuminated by the light of a basic theme, a theme essentially metaphysical. Throughout the entire play runs a refrain, the refrain of the two laws. For Creon reason and civic order are of paramount import ; for Antigone, led by faith and emotion, the spiritual commandment is all. Between these conflicting forces, Sophocles holds an even course, for this is no propaganda play.

"*Oedipus Tyrannus*" is perhaps the play by which he is most widely known, and one must agree that its planning is magnificent, its dialogue supremely fashioned, its revelation of character profound. The entire play is executed with masterly precision, event following

on event, the passion continually on the build. Because of its dramatic skill, Aristotle, when he sought for support of his arguments in his "*Poetics*", took it as the prime example of tragedy.

"*Ajax*" is a terrible study of tragic error. Ajax, one of the most renowned warriors among the Greeks, deems that a prized honour, the arms of Achilles, should fall to his lot. These arms are, however, given to Odysseus, and Ajax, bitterly wounded in his pride, sets out by night to murder the leaders of the expedition, whom he believes responsible for this insult. Angered at his exhibition of overweening pride, the goddess Athens comes from Olympus, and darkens his mind with madness so that he falls upon the enemy's flock of the sheep in the fond delusion that he is slaying his enemies. In the end, having recovered from his frenzy, and consumed by shame, he commits suicide.

Sophocles has been universally admired for the sympathy and vividness with which he draws characters, especially notable are his tragic women : *Electra*, *Antigone*, *Fecmessa*, and others. Also, few dramatist have been able to handle situation and plot with more power and certainty. *Further*, he is unsurpassed in his moments of high tragic tension, and in his revealing use of irony. He grappled neither with religious problems like Aeschylus, nor with intellectual and social ones like Euripides. He contented himself with presenting human characters and human conflicts.

If Sophocles shows himself akin to Shakespeare, Euripides, with his prevailing intellectualism and disillusionment, frequently reminds us of Shaw. His tendency to doubt the truth of the ancient legends, to question the wisdom of the past, presented him with a peculiar dramatic problem, and through his solution to that problem he drew the theatre still nearer to our age. Two things, however, Euripides was eager to do—to make the characters real and ordinary, and to use them for the purpose of philosophizing on the events. From these two endeavours came his changes in dramatic structure. Obviously the chorus was a theatrical element out of keeping with his central idea, and, as a consequence, in most of his plays he tended to reduce its participation in the main action until it became nothing save as detached groups of singers indulging in the presentation of chants only slightly related to the major themes. To compensate for what was thus lost, Euripides provided brilliant and beautiful lyrics for this group to sing. Due to his individualistic attitude towards the legendary themes, he found himself compelled to introduce, at the very beginning of his plays, explanatory matter designed to give the audience information essential for an understanding of his point of view, hence the need of 'prologue'. *Electra, Medea* and *Hecuba* are his outstanding plays (tragedies).

Euripides had moments of brilliant psychological insight and enlarged the range of man's understanding of himself. This judgment does not mean that he was pre-eminent as a portrayer of characters ;

in fact the men and women who appear in his plays are less memorable than those of Sophocles. But in single scenes, he is stimulated to enter into the mind of a character with extraordinary completeness, particularly, it was observed by Longinus, in scenes of love and madness. But when situation changes, inspiration fades, nothing striking is left in his plays.

The most important single fact about Greek tragedy is that its subject was, with rare exceptions, myth, and the basic difference between the three great tragic poets is to be found in their attitude to the myth. For Aeschylus myth was that through which reality might be comprehended ; for Sophocles it revealed man's potentialities at their hightest level, but for Europides it was mere collection of stories without any particular authority, or, rather, with a false authority used to support primitive and pernicious conception.

In tragedy, Rome faithfully followed Greece like a vast "but often dim and distorted shadow". Three great artists, Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius won great acclaim in their own day. They seemed to have added to their Greek models a Roman 'viridity and energy". But unfortunately their works survive only in fragments. The so-called tragedies of Seneca fail to give us the tragic impression because of their emphasis on sheer horror and external melodramatic action. Seneca's tragedies are often false, sadistic, tawdry with rhetoric and hyperbole and epigram. Revenge is not a lofty motive and it is the chief motive of the typical Senecan play. In order to emphasize this idea of vengeance at the outset, certain plays, as *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon*, open with a ghost or a fury who recounts the crime which is to avenged. There is scarcely any of the artistic swinging backward and forward of the pendulum of suspense from hope to fear which is found in Greek tragedy.

The history of rhetorical tragedies in England opens with "*Gorboduc*". In his play the genre drama has assumed a very strange garb ; it is so stiff in movement and so full of elaborate set speeches that it is difficult for us now-a-days to appreciate it as drama at all. "University Wits" laid the foundations on which a magnificent edifice was to be constructed by Shakespeare. Less brilliant and less poetic than Marlowe, Kyd, nevertheless, possessed tremendous vigour, and he understood the requirements of the stage even better than his friend: despite the punning of Ben Jonson who called him "Sportive Kyd", he had a natural bent for tragedy. The one play which can be ascribed to him with certainty is "*The Spanish Tragedy*", the most successful work of his day. A notable feature of Senecan tragedy was its employment of the revenge motive. Kyd's tragedy, which dramatised the revenge of a grief-striken father, brought this type of drama to its highest peak before Shakespeare. "*The Spanish Tragedy*" offers us a coherent and artistically constructed plot in which the threads of the action are skilfully interwoven and complicated. Although a number of subsidiary episodes are introduced, the course of the main plot remain perfectly clear. He is thought also to have

written the lost revenge play of *Hamlet*, upon which Shakespeare based his most famous tragedy.

Marlowe guided Shakespeare into the right way of work. He is the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired poineer, in all the English poetic literature. Before him there was neither genuine blank-verse nor a genuine tragedy in English language. After his arrival the way was prepared, the paths were made straight for Shakespeare. Marlowe cast in clay what Shakespeare recast in marble.

Marlowe was the first to place upon the Elizabethan stage heroes who are the dominating characters in Drama. The Medieval world fixed its eyes on the turning of fortune's wheel and saw all men almost undistinguished except by place. Even in the dramas of his contemporaries like Peele and Greene, there was no dominant central figure for the action, and their characters are not drawn strongly. Marlowe concentrated all his creative power on one towering and colossal figure, round which the other characters revolve like satellites in the orbit of the planet. His heroes are the embodiment of the Renaissance spirit. "*Tamberlaine*" is his famous play. *Tamberlaine*, as Marlowe conceived him, illustrates the victory of the imagination over the material world, the heroic will that transcends human limitations and aspires to be divine. The success of "*Tamberlaine*" was followed by that of entirely different kind of play, *Dr. Faustus*. Faustus has a zest for 'knowledge infinite.' But he does not want to acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge ; he wants to be omnipotent. He wants to be what 'Joveis in the sky'. '*Doctor Faustus*' develops into a spiritual tragedy, in the sense that the external circumstances and events of the play no longer have any intrinsic value, but are significant only in so far as they enable us to understand Faustus's spiritual state and to see what goes on inside his mind. Faustus's antagonists are not human beings, but ultimately supernatural power which ally themselves with the forces in his own soul. "*The Jew of Malta*" is another tragedy of Marlowe. It has a plot which is full of incident, and which includes a variety of swiftly developing scenes skilfully interwoven with subsidiary episodes.

Unlike the medieval tragedies where the central theme dealt with the falling of a great person from happiness, Marlowe lays greater stress on the struggle of some brave, ambitious soul against forces which are too strong for it. His tragedies deal not merely with life or death, or a bloody crime, or a reversal of fortune, but with the heroic struggle of a great personality doomed to inevitable defeat. Marlowe determined the victory of blank verse at a time when the popular playwrights oscillated between prose and rhymed couplet Ben Jonson characterised Marlowe's blank verse as "Mighty Line."

Shakespeare was the chief creator as well as the glory of English tragedy. Though he wrote a number of tragedies, yet in order to understand his conception of tragedy we have to take into account his four great tragedies——Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and

Macbeth. *King Lear* is tragedy of ingratitude; *Othello* is the tragedy of jealousy ; *Macbeth* is the tragedy of ambition; *Hamlet* is the tragedy of moral frustation. "*Hamlet*" is the conspectus of humanity. Age after age has seen itself reflected in the hero of this play, because Shakespeare, in depicting this central figure, has seized upon human qualities of wide diffusion. The result is a strange paradox : we feel admiration for Hamlet ; and at the same time we feel that Hamlet is a representative of ordinary humanity; in Hamlet is something of ourselves. In *Othello*, Shakespeare turned to attempt a somewhat different kind of theme. *Hamlet*, with its extensive canvas, is unquestionably romantic, the tightness of *Othello's* structure has a classic simplicity. In *Hamlet* a prince is the hero; *Othello* takes us more into the realm of the ordinary : its setting is republican Venice and its hero a man who, although general of the Doge's forces, is placed before us mainly in his domestic capacity. We are moving here on a less exalted plane, and the element of mystery is absent. *King Lear* swings us tempestuously back into the realm of the metaphysical and the exalted. As a play calculated for the stage, its virtues are perhaps below those of *Othello* ; but in majesty of concept and intensity of emotion it attempts heights far beyond. In *Othello* the force of evil was symbolized in a single human figure—that of Iago; in *King Lear* the whole of nature seems to become impregnated with the vapour of evil. With *Macbeth* we reach the end of this magnificent series of tragic dramas, and once more there is placed before us a play of elemental scope. Magnificently as the central characters are placed before us, it is the theme rather than the persons that seizes on our imagination and stirs our emotions. As De Quincey so clearly realized and so brilliantly put into words, this is a play of hell in which Macbeth's dark castle, with its great doors shutting out the world of humanity, is endowed with a symbolic significance.

Shakespeare's study of human nature is very subtle and deep. This very quality has endowed his plays with universality. Ben Jonson said, "He is not of an age, but of all times." His art is free from the barriers of time and space. He has, as Dryden observes, a 'comprehensive soul'. He cast penetrative glances at life from different angles and couches in appropriate words whatever he feels. If the sailors of the Elizabethan age maped the oceans of the world, Shakespeare fathomed the oceans of heart and mind. Some critics are of opinion that Shakespearian tragedies lack in "poetic justice". Poetic justice means that prosperity and adversity are distributed in proportion to the merits of the agent. Such 'poetic justice' is in flagrant contradiction with the facts of life. In actual life, culprits are not always punished and virtuous persons are not always rewarded. Shakespeare was a great disciple of nature. Some critics endeavour to show that Bacon wrote Shakespeare; but my contention is that "Nature" wrote Shakespeare. How could he afford to mete out "poetic justice" to his characters ? Some critics assess the value of his plays with the Aristotelian rules and

find flaws in his art. But Shakespeare is an institution in himself; he is not to be judged by the ancient criterion. Let us beware of blaming a lilly because it is not a rose !

Tragedy declined after Shakespeare. When the tragedies written during the 17th century are put to the highest test, we must admit that, brilliant though individual scenes may be, they fall short of perfection. Sense of character-drawing becomes increasingly weaker ; larger compositional values are lost ; novelties in the exploitation of sensational incident grow more and more frequent ; for boldness of passion appears subtly degenerate emotions. John Webster is a prominent playwright of this period. His characters are dynamic and alive with passion ; their pathos is never sentimental, their evil is unconventional and reaches sublimity. His verse is the poetry of the highest order; while his prose crackles with satire. The spirit of greatness hovers over the stormy wasters of his invention. "*The White Devil*" is one of his outstanding plays. As in so many other of Jacobean dramas, the stage becomes cluttered here with inessentials and with a plethora of horrors; but no one can deny that Webster has, with singular skill, created an atmosphere of courtly evil or that he has succeeded in presenting to us one of the most memorable, although at the same time one of the most unsympathetic, heroines in the entire course of the drama. The mood of the "*Duchess of Mulfi*" is similar, but the personality of the heroine is vastly different. She is presented as a woman of highest lineage. His scenes display delicate psychological penetrations, not the tempestuousness of passion that consumes an Othello and overwhelms a Lear.

His genius, it is true, is narrow, since he knows nothing of the genial laughter, the tenderness, and the pleasant fantasy of Shakespeare. He is the elegist of a dying age.

The fate of drama during the 18th century was but a sorry one. Despite the fact that playwright after playwright attempted to emulate the triumphs of his predecessors in this kind, the conditions were so unpropitious that little of worth emerged.

In the 19th century, tragedy almost monopolised the activities of the major poets who were entirely romantic and imaginative. Lord Byron produced "*Manfred*" Keats wrote "*Otho the Great*" and Shelley "*Censi.*" Coleridge wrote "*Remorse.*" But all of them failed to create a vigorous romantic drama. Audiences were rough in those years and their tastes vulgar, the poets were inclined towards solitariness; the two trends, reacting upon each other, served to drive the pair apart. The poets came to despise the contemporary stage; the spectators could find no joy in the rather dull poetic dramas. Above all, however, was the fact that the English poets were so thoroughly immersed in the Shakespearian style that all their efforts were remote from the spirit of their own age.

Ibsen reveals himself as a kind of massive symbol of all that his age sought for and achieved in dramatic form. Within the course of his works, we can see, as though in a concentrating mirror, an image of his age's countenance. As a craftsman, his position is secure. He evolved a powerful technique suited to the modern stage. In his casting aside of the older methods of exposition, in his attempt to allow character gradually to evolve as the action proceeds, and in his demonstration of what can be achieved by means of strict economy of form he was followed by many a successors.

His plays have a power beyond that of nearly all other realistic dramas of his time. Partly this is due to the fact that in him a poetic spirit sang lyrical tunes even when he was engaged in handling material of sordid reality ; principally it is due to the fact that not one of his principal characters is ordinary or commonplace. Ibsen's characters are of an entirely different category. He portrays scenes of middle class life, but the creatures who inhabit these scenes are not of the middle range of humanity. When we think of them, we think of human beings "possessed." Nora is not an ordinary wife. She hears a call from the mountains, not from the market place. The result is that while outwardly his scenes are ordinary and materialistically conceived, inwardly they are extraordinary.

The bold creativeness of Shakespeare and Goethe is sporadically present in the totality of Ibsen's output. Euripides' fatal attack on convention, as well as his retrospective technique, pulsates in his works.

Finally, the great modern tragic artist is John Galsworthy. His heroes and heroines are not great men or women. We do not come in contact with Othellos, Hamlets and Cleopatras in his plays. On the other hand, we meet ordinary men and women like Mr. Winsor, Dancy, Anthony and Roberts. According to him, the tragic spirit can be infused by means of a labourer, photographer or a shopkeeper, who can elevate us by means of his grandeur. His heroes and heroines have not the sublimity, elevation or grandeur as we find in Shakespearian tragedies There are no convulsions, crisis, sorrows, conflicts and pleasurable reliefs. They do not raise us to the pitch of tragic art. In fact, they lack the universality which is the salient feature of Shakespearian tragedy. His heroes and heroines do not survive in the long run because of the tragic Hamartia. His "*Strife*" ends with the death of Robert and Anthony. Their deaths give us the sense of reconciliation. There is a compromise between men and their master. There is a tragic appeal in the romantic tragedies of Shakespeare which is lacking entirely in the modern tragic playwright. Thus there is monotony, dullness and dreariness. The sense of waste and reconciliation is not fully realised. Further, Galsworthy's plays are concerned with the problems of the modern age, which are lacking universality. He has made efforts to make

his tragedies universal. But his achievements are in a different manner. The social forces have not the perennial effects. The heroes of Galsworthy's tragedies are the victim of unseen circumstances of modern existence. They are struggling against the omnipotent social force. They cannot cope with the circumstances and cry out in moments of desperation and horror. Keeping in view his conception of tragedy, he has endeavoured to evoke the tragic impression and poignancy. But his art does not become universal and eternal like that of Shakespeare.

T. S. Eliot is another playwright of our age. His first full length play "*Murder in the Cathedral*" treats the conflict between the claims of the world and the claims of the spirit. The central figure, Thomas O Becket, and his fate are impressive; but since the heroes' conflicts are almost completely resolved before the play begins, it is difficult to develop much suspence. In fact, the play is not, in any sense, a tragedy; it is a dramatised saint's legend. In Eliot's plays, the emphasis is on the theme, not on the action. His weakness lies in the stagnation of the plot. But despite certain limitations, his plays are surely the most striking feature, from the literary point of view, that the English stage has had to offer since the First World War.

23 The English Comedy

Comedy, from the very old times, has been relegated to a lower place in the dramatic hierarchy. Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, is mentioned nearly always later than Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy. Comedy has never been taken with the same seriousness as tragedy.

It is very difficult to define comedy in precise terms. We all have general notions as to what comedy is and what we term comic. Roughly speaking, comedy is opposed to tragedy; it aims at provoking laughter, not tears; it tends to present an amusing, not a grave view of life. Thus comedy is a play which deals with the light and trivial occurrences of life in an amusing way.

According to Aristotle, comedy is an imitation of men worse than average : worse not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular kind, the ridiculous. The ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harms to others. In other words, comedy deals with 'some defect or ugliness, that is not painful or destructive.

There are other scholars who have made efforts to define comedy. Horace Walpole's well-known dictum is : "Life is comedy for those who think, and a tragedy for those who feel." The other two renowned critics, Meredith and Bergson, have explained the purpose and nature of comedy in their essays, "Idea of Comedy" and "Laughter" respectively. According to them, comedy appeals to the intelligence, pure and simple. Its aim is corrective and satiric.

The English comedy which had made its early start under the influence of Terence and Plautus in '*Ralph Roister Doister*' and marched ahead with a surety in the comedies of Lyle and Greene, reached its acme of perfection in the hands of Shakespeare, the leader of the 'Romantic Comedy' in English drama.

An adventure into the world of Shakespearian comedy is a picnic in romance. Shakespeare's romantic comedy is pre-eminently the comedy of love. The plot is saturated with idealized love and friendship. The chief occupation of the characters of the play is nothing

but love. Love is the motive force of his romantic comedy. There is complication or entanglement when love-episodes develop the comedies. Humour is the next ingredient of Shakespearian comedy. Cruel or harsh laughter is almost ruled out. On the whole, his humour is tolerant, sympathetic, genial and sparkling. Dowden says: "The genial laughter of Shakespeare at human absurdity is free from even that amiable cynicism, which gives to the humour of Jane Austen a certain piquant flavour; it is like the play of summer lightning, which hurts no living creature, but surprises, illuminates and charms." Thus Shakespearian comedy is a fascinating farrago of romance and humour.

The cardinal characteristic of Shakespearian comedy is the fusion of realism and fancy. Though the background and atmosphere is romantic and utopian, yet life keeps hovering over it and enters into it. In this respect, Charlton remarks: "But though the ultimate world of Shakespeare's comedy is romantic, poetic and imaginative, it is by no means unsubstantial and fantastic. The forest of Arden is no conventional Arcadia. Its inhabitants are not exempt from the penalty of Adam. Winter, rough weather, the icy fog and churlish chiding of the winter's wind invade Arden as often as they invade this hemisphere of ours." The settings of his comedies are imaginative ——an unhistorical trance. Ephesus, Thebes, Arden, Illyria and Venice——each one is conceived in the glow of a strange and beautiful fancy. Yet all are related to real life. In the last resort, the greatness of Shakespearian comedies will be measured by the profundity of the apprehension of life which they embody.

In Shakespeare's comedy, characterisation is of a high order. There are complex moods and subtle characters in these comedies. Another trait of these comedies is the predominant role of women. An analysis of his comedies clearly indicates that the heroes pale into insignificance and the heroines are responsible for the beginning and the development of the stories. They are pygmies as compared with the heroes of tragedies. Referring to Shakespeare's comedies, Ruskin has said : "Shakespeare has no heroes; he has only heroines." His heroines have attributes of personality to make their career achieve a goal which lead to the path of happiness. In women, Shakespeare finds equilibrium and balance in their lives. They claim to rule in the comedies because of their embodiment of the qualities of the head and heart. According to Charlton : "Shakespeare's enthronement of woman as queen of comedy is no mere accident. Because they are women, these heroines have attributes of personality fitting them more certainly than men to shape the world towards happiness. His menfolk, a Hamlet or a Macbeth or an Othello, may have a subtler intellect, a more penetrating or more irresistible passion. But they are out of harmony with themselves, and so are fraught with certainty of tragic doom. Their personality is a mass of mighty forces out of the equipoise; they lack the balance of a durable spiritual organism. It was in woman that Shakespeare found this equipoise, this balance which makes personality in action a sort

of ordered interplay of the major qualities of human nature. In his women, hand and heart and brain are fused in a vital and practicable union, each contributing to the other, no one of them permanently pressing for demands to the detriment of the others, yet each asserting itself periodically to exercise its vitality, even if the immediate effect be a temporary disturbance of equilibrium, for not otherwise will they be potent to exercise their proper function when the whole of their owner's spiritual nature is struck into activity."

Every Shakespearian tragedy as well as every Shakespearian comedy represents a blending of the tragic and comic. It has been justly said that Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies come of the same house. The line of demarcation between a comedy and a tragedy is a thin one; comedy shades into tragedy in an imperceptible manner and tragedy has a strong mixture of the light and comic material. In the universe of Shakespeare's play, as in the actual universe, isolated sorrow or isolated happiness does not exist. 'Life is a pendulum between smiles and tears,' as one of Shakespeare's brother poets puts it tersely; and drama is a representation of life. Hence there are comic elements in tragedies like *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*; there are tragicelements in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Winter's Tale Cymbeline*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well* etc. There is a blending of the tragic and the comic even in the sunny, joyous and bright comedy of *As You Like It*.

When Meredith speaks half contemptuously of Shakespeare's comedy of incredible imbroglio, he refers to the plot of his (Shakespeare's) comedies, which, depending as it does largely upon mistakes and confusion brought about by disguise or family resemblance, has been almost universally explored by critics as puerile and mechanical. Shakespeare has inherited this "imbroglio" plot partly from the non-infrequent use of family resemblance in Plautus, and partly from the Italian and Spanish *Novella*. Dr. Freeburg has pointed out that artificial as the disguise motive may seem to modern spectators and critics nourished upon realistic drama, it was an accepted convention of the Elizabethan stage. He says: "It was, in fact, dramatically highly effective, since it simultaneously set upon complications in the plot, gave full play to the expectations of the audience, and enabled the dramatist to accomplish the most difficult task, a neat termination of the play."

In the history of English comedy, Shakespeare's is an honoured name. Centuries of artistic endeavour in the same field by celebrities have not been able to supercede his glorious achievement.

Ben Jonson, the great contemporary of Shakespeare, set his face against the romantic comedy practised by Shakespeare, and revived the lore of classical comedy in his plays. "Tales and tempests, cross-wooings and romantic love-languishings, clowns and professional jesters——all these were anathema to Ben Jonson, who decided to bring comedy back to her original form, aiming at truth

to life as we know it, with a satirical method and an ethical purpose" Ben Jonson's comedies are realistic in character and satirical in intent. They aim at an exposure of the vices and evils of the society of his time in such a manner that follies may be corrected. He states his role as a comedian in the following words:

I'll strip the ragged follies of the time
Naked, as at their birth and with a whip of steel
Print wounding lashes in their iron ribs."

Ben Jonson says. "As tragedy works out its morality by the effects of pity and fear, so comedy achieves its aim, which is also ethical, by mockery of baseness and folly." All the comedies of Ben Jonson, particularly '*Every Man in His Humour*' and '*Alchemist*', are an illustration of his theory of comedy. The are realistic in tone and satirical in purpose.

The realistic-cum-satirical comedy of Ben Jonson was followed in the Jacobean and Caroline period, when there was a craze not for the romantic comedy of Shakespeare but for the realistic comedy of his illustrious competitor. The dramatists of his period, Heywood, Dekkar, Beaumont and Fletcher, presented London life in their comedies, some with sympathy and understanding, while others with banter and satire.

English comedy suffered a set back during the Romantic and Victorian age, when literary artists exhibited a great love for poetry and novel than drama.

The twentieth century has witnessed a revival of dramatic activity, and comedy has received a new lease of life in our times. English comedy has taken two forms in our age. We have comedies of ideas and comedies of pure entertainment (comedies of manners). Among those who popularised the comedy of ideas, the names of Ibsen and Bernard Shaw are worthy of remembrance. Shaw is known to the world as a writer of comedies scintillating with wit and flashes of bright humour. But Shaw's comedies are not intended to provide nothing but fun and delight. They have a mission to carry out, and the dramatist uses the medium of comedy for discussion of problems facing our society. "I write with the deliberate object of converting the people to my way of thinking', writes Shaw in one of his prefaces. He has ideas of his own to propagate through his comedies, and he has achieved great success in his mission as a dramatist. He employs the instrument of satire and the method of realism like Ben Jonson to achieve his end. The mantle of Ben Jonson has fallen on Shaw in the twentieth century.

The comedy of pure entertainment and delight (comedy of manners in the common parley) has been produced by a number of playwrights, the chief of them being Oscar Wilde, Noel Coward, Somerset Maugham and Alfred Sutro. They have tried to revive the comedy of manners, with no other object save to cater to the popular taste of the times.

24

Modern Drama

After the death of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, drama in England suffered a decline for about two centuries. Even Congreve in the seventeenth century, and Sheridan and Goldsmith in the eighteenth, could not restore drama to the position it held during the Elizabeth age. It was revived, however, in the last decade of the nineteenth century and there appeared dramatists who gave it respectable place in English literature.

Two important factors were responsible for the revival of drama in 1890's. One was the influence of Ibsen, the great Norwegian dramatist under which the English dramatists like Bernard Shaw claimed the right to discuss serious social and moral problems in a calm, sensible way. The second was the cynical atmosphere prevailing at that time which allowed men like Oscar Wilde to treat the moral assumptions of the Victorian age with frivolity and make polite fun of their conventionality, prudishness and smugness. The first factor gave rise to the comedy of ideas or purpose, while the second revived the comedy of manners or artificial comedy.

Under the influence of Ibsen, the serious drama in England from 1890 onward ceased to deal with themes remote in time and place. The new dramatists gave up the melodramatic romanticism and pseudo-classical remoteness of their predecessors, and began to treat in their plays the actual English life. They dealt mainly with the problems of sex and labour. Influenced by the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the psychological investigations of Freud, the new dramatists no longer held love or the relation between sexes as something sacred or romantic as their forefathers did. They looked upon it as a biological phenomenon directed by nature, or the 'Life Force', as Bernard Shaw called it. Thus these dramatists introduced nature and life in drama.

In the new drama of ideas, where a number of theories had to be propounded and explained, action became slow. The new researches in the field of psychology helped the dramatists in the study of the 'soul', for the expression of which they had to resort to symbols. By means of symbolism, they raised the dark and even sordid themes to artistic levels. Moreover, inner conflict was substituted for outer conflict with the result that drama became quieter than the romantic drama of the previous years.

The two important dramatists who took a predominant part in the revival of drama in the last decade of the nineteenth century were Bernard Shaw, and Oscar Wilde, both Irishmen. Shaw was the greatest practitioner of the comedy of ideas, while Oscar Wilde that of the new comedy of manners.

Bernard Shaw, the Father of the Comedy of Ideas, is a genius. His intellectual equipment is far greater than that of any of his contemporaries. In each of his plays, he presents a certain problem connected with modern life, and his characters discuss it thoroughly. In order to make his ideas still more explicit, he adds prefaces to his plays. The main burden of his plays is that the civilized man must either develop or perish. Shaw laughs at and ridicules even things which others respect or hold sacred. What saves him from persecution as a rebel is his innate sense of humour, which helps him to give a frivolous cover to whatever he says or writes. His frankness and sincerity compels the people to listen to him even when he provokes, exasperates and shocks many of them.

All the plays of Shaw deal with some problem concerning modern society. In '*Mrs. Warren's Profession*', Shaw shows that for evils of prostitution the society, not the procuress, is to be blamed. In *Man and Superman*, he deals with his favourite theme *i.e.*, 'Life Force' which compels women to hunt out man, capture and marry him for the continuation of the race. In *Getting Married* he shows the unnaturalness of home life. In '*The Apple Cart*' Shaw ridicules the working of democratic form of government and hints that it needs a superman to set things right.

Other modern dramatists who have written comedies of ideas are : Galsworthy, Granville-Barker, Priestley and John Masefield. Of these Galsworthy is most important. Besides being a novelist of the first rank, he has made his mark also in the field of drama. He believes in the naturalistic technique both in the novel and drama. According to him, "Naturalistic art is like a steady lamp, held up from time to time, in whose light things will be seen for a space clearly in due proportion, free from the mists of prejudice and partisanship". He produces, both upon the stage and in his books, the natural spectacle of life.

The important plays of Galsworthy are : *Strife*, *Justice*, *The Skin Game* and *The Silver Box*. All these plays deal with social and ethical problems. *Strife* deals with the problem of strikes, which are not only futile but do immense harm to both the parties. *The Skin Game* presents the conflict between the old-established landed aristocracy and the ambitious, new rich manufacturing class. *The Silver Box* illustrates the old proverb that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. Galsworthy effects in all his plays a strict economy of style and characterisation and they are denuded of all superfluity. But sometimes he carries simplicity of aim and singleness of purpose too far and the result is that his plays lack human warmth and richness which are essential elements in literature.

John Masefield combines in himself high imagination and a sternly classical spirit, passionate enthusiasm and cold logic, fantasy and realism. All these conflicting qualities are seen in his greatest play—— "*The Tragedy of Nan*" which is the best modern example of domestic tragedy. In spite of the supernatural and imaginative cast of the play, the story is one of unflinching realism.

Oscar Wilde is a writer of artificial comedy or the comedy of manners. He has the tact of discovering the passing mood of the time and expressing it gracefully. Otherwise his plays are all superficial, and none of them add to our knowledge or understanding of life. The situations he presents in his plays are hackneyed and borrowed from French plays of intrigue. Oscar Wilde's important comedies are : "*Lady Windermere's Fan*", "*A Woman of no Importance*", "*An Ideal Husband*" and "*The Importance of Being Earnest*". Other modern writers who have followed Wilde directly are Somerset Maugham and Noel Conard. But the artificial comedy of the last fifty years in England does not compare well with the artificial comedy of the Restoration Period.

Besides the artificial comedy and the comedy of ideas, another type of drama has been developed in England under the influence of the '*Irish Dramatic Movement*'. This movement is nothing but a reaction against the realistic drama of Shaw and Wilde. Its protagonists are W.B. Yeats and J.M. Synge ; they want to introduce flavour, richness and poetry in drama.

Though Yeats has written about thirty plays,the important and widely known ones are *The Countess Cathleen* and *The Land of Heart's Desire*. His plays are defective in their organic constructions, and they do not maintain the proper balance between poetry, action and characterisation. The poetic element obtrudes too much and prevents the creation of the illusion of possible people behaving credibly and using an appropriate speech medium. The fact is that Yeats is essentially a romantic lyric poet and, therefore, he cannot handle the dramatic form with ease.

J.M. Synge exercises strictest economy in his plays, and he rarely admits a superfluous word. The result is that sometimes his humour becomes too grim and his tragedy bitterly painful. His '*Riders to the Sea*', which is one of the greatest tragedies written in the twentieth century, is considered by some crities too harrowing and ruthless.

T.S. Eliot is responsible for the rebirth of poetic drama in England. His famous plays are : '*Murder in the Cathedral*', *Cocktail Party* and '*The Confidential Clerk*. Though these plays contain some of the best dramatic poetry since the Elizabethan age, they lack generally the essential qualities of drama. Moreover, the pattern of meaning of these dramas is rather difficult and obsure

The latest movement in drama in England is the rapid development of the historical play. The exploitation of historical themes is

the result of deliberate endeavour to escape from the trammels of naturalism and to bring back something of the poetic expression to the theatre. The close association between the poetic school and the historical school is well exemplified by John Drinkwater and Clifford Bax. Drinkwater's '*Abraham Lincoln*' is such a great success that it has made the author internationally famous. Clifford Bax has written several poetic plays, of which the important ones are: *Socrates*, '*The Immortal Lady*' and '*The Rose without the Thorn*'. They are lyrical and philosophical plays,and the characters in them are developed within a pattern, based on historic facts, but shaped by imagination.

25 Drama—the Criticism of Life

Though some critics hold that drama is the criticism of life, and that it has a moral and ethical purpose ; others declare that the main purpose of drama is pleasure and amusement only. There is no doubt that when we see the performance of a great play, like *Hamlet*, or even read it, we get something more than mere entertainment. We feel that our view of life has been deepened. That is why for centuries great critics have been echoing the judgment that "delight and instruction" have been the twin aims of the dramatist. When Aristotle formulated his theory of Catharsis, urging that a good tragedy purges up of the emotions of pity and fear, he was obviously emphasising on the practical purpose of drama. Aelius Donatus, another critic, affirmed that "comedy is a story which deals with various habits and customs of public and private affairs from which may be learned, on one hand, what is useful in life, and, on the other, what is to be avoided." According to Sir Philip Sidney, in comedy we see the petty vices laid bare, and in tragedy the royal evils which 'teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations guilden roofs are build." In Ben Jonson's opinion, the aim of drama is to "delight and teach." Dryden remarked that "to instruct delightfully is the general end of poetry."

It is true that some plays like Shaw's *Man and Superman* deliberately preach a certain thesis, but some of the great masterpieces of dramatic art have no such definite aim in view. And obviously some comedies, like Congreve's *'The Way of the World'*, deal with a ridiculous plot which might be amusing in the theatre. It is by taking into account such instances that Lessing, the great German dramatic critic, comes to the conclusion that normally we do not look for an instructive purpose in the drama, although an individual writer may produce an effective drama written around some special view of life or some special thesis. But it does not mean that the moral is absolutely extraneous to drama. Goethe, who is a greater critic than Lessing says : "If a poet has as high a soul as Sophocles, his influence will always be moral, let him do what he will, and herein, probably, lurks the real truth."

There is no doubt that drama is the most objective of all forms of literature. As Henry James has remarked : "A novel is,

in the broadest definition, a personal impression of life ; the drama, on the other hand, from the strictly theoretical standpoint, may be regarded as an impersonal representative of life. Unlike the novelist, who can occasionally appear in his own person and give his own interpretation of events, and even go to the extent of making a formal statement of his philosophy of life, the dramatist can never appear in his person in his action." But a good dramatist can escape from the cramping restraints, and made his presence felt there in the person of some accredited representative.

In the Greek tragedies, chorus gave an opportunity to the dramatist to make it a mouthpiece of his philosophy. Though in modern drama, chorus is seldom used, yet the dramatist can make one of the characters take the place of chorus. For example, in '*Antony and Cleopatra*,' Shakespeare uses Enobarbus to serve the purpose of chorus. On account of his detached attitude to the action of play, Enobarbus helps to put us at the right point of view in regard to Cleopatra, and by his comments at critical moments in the action, he brings out clearly the meaning of Antony's degeneration under the spell of the "Serpent of Nile." Such characters in the plays of Shakespeare stand apart from the other characters. In modern plays of ideas, where the main purpose of the dramatist is to establish a certain thesis and expound some moral problems, we often find some character, who does not help in any way the progress of the action, but whose main function is simply to move through it as a philosophic spectator, and to interpret the significance of the action on behalf of the writer. Just as the closing words of a Sophoclean chorus serve to strike the 'fine balance' of the action, in Ibsen's '*Wild Duck*,' the statement of the cynical Dr. Ralling that "Life might be quite tolerable if only we were left in peace by these blessed dums who are continually knocking at the door of us poor folk with their ideal demand" sums up the pessimistic moral which it is the design of Ibsen to enforce.

But even if we rule out the role of the expositor in a play, the dramatist, without having recourse to this device of direct representation, can find an opportunity of conveying to the audience his own thoughts and feelings. This he can do through the utterances of his various characters, who, without ceasing to speak in accordance with their personalities and situations, may still be used by the dramatist as exponents of his ideas about men and things. Of course, an objection can be raised against an indiscriminate collection of wise sayings and quotations out of their contexts, and referring them directly to the dramatist himself. Prof. Moulton says : "For every word in a play some imaginary speaker and only he, is responsible ; and thus in dramatic literature no amount of quotations can give us the mind of the poet or the meaning of the play."

Though there is some truth in Prof. Moulton's statement, yet there is an element of exaggeration in it. Though in theory it is right that the dramatist keeps himself aloof, and takes a most

objective view of his characters and situations, yet he cannot always suppress and keep in the background his own personality. He does sometimes, knowingly or unknowingly, drop the mask and express those feelings and ideas, for which he, and not his imaginary character or spokesman, is responsible.

Every great play is like a microcosm of which the dramatist is the creator. The world which the dramatist calls into being with all its men and women, actions, passions, motives, struggles, failures, is a world of his own creation. He himself is the master of the whole show, and the plot that he constructs is like the scheme of Providence. Therefore the dramatist cannot but project his own personality in his creation. His individual temperament, his attitude to life and its multifarious problems, his interests and the direction and pattern of his thoughts, must be reflected in his plays. A careful study of his work, and the analysis of the total impression, intellectual and moral, which it makes upon us, certainly help us to grasp the broad principles of the dramatist's underlying philosophy of life.

The doctrine of 'Art for Art's Sake' applies least to drama, because every great play makes an appeal to the practical and moral concern of ordinary people. Their technical subtleties and complexities may delight the dramatic critics, but they must always and primarily make the common appeal. There can be 'pure poetry' which is written for its own sake, having no practical motive, but there cannot be a 'pure drama.' It is because drama is always and inevitably concerned with the problem of conduct, and therefore, every great play must have a moral point of view. By a moral point of view is not meant that the dramatist must conform to the ethical views of a particular religion. It means simply that the dramatist must take sides regarding the debatable courses of action he presents, in accordance with the ethical standards which his audience is able to infer and respect.

All the great plays of the world have a moral point of view. For example, among the Greek dramatists, Aeschylus in his plays sought to justify the ways of gods to men ; Euripides challenged outdated moral assumptions ; and Sophocles was a lover of nobility of character. Moliere, the great French comedist, always sought to amuse his audience, but his point of view was nonetheless ethical, as he was constantly ridiculing excess and folly and praising moderation and reason. Shakespeare's '*Macbeth*' is a fine illustration of the doctrine of 'Nemesis.'

It is in the very nature of dramatic subject-matter that the playwright must adopt a moral attitude. Arnold has rightly remarked that conduct is three-fourths of life. For the sake of self-preservation and securing happiness for ourselves and others, we have constantly to make a choice of our conduct. Now it is on the basis of this choice of conduct that the dramatist constructs his plot. Even if the dramatist avoids all ethical implications and is impartial towards

the conduct of his characters, the audience would certainly judge his plays primarily by their moral feeling towards the conduct of its characters. Just as we are ever taking sides for or against the conduct of our fellows, we adopt the same attitude towards the characters of a play, and the very essence of dramatic emotion is our participation in the struggle of human beings.

Of course, we object to obvious propaganda by a dramatist. The business of the playwright is not to preach but to present, and we want to draw our own conclusion. The successful dramatist does not deal with ethics by talking about the consequences of the choice of a certain course of action on the part of a character in an abstract manner : he simply shows them. It is on accouut of the moral implications that 'drama is a difficult art.' If the dramatist forces his characters to fit the thesis, he renders them unreal ; if, on the other hand, he subordinates his thesis to life-like characterisation, he renders his play confused and insignificant.

To combine a powerful ethical theme with living characters in a unified action, dramatically moving and psychologically convincing, is a rare dramatic skill. The basis of all great drama, as of all good art, is the love of what is good in humanity, and it can be created only by men of goodwill. It is this goodwill, apart from the technical skill, which is the root of great drama, and it is this quality which makes all the great plays have a moral point of view.

NOVEL

SELECT QUOTATIONS

"All serious work in fiction is autobiographical".

Joseph Joubert

"The business of the novelist is not to relate greate events, but to make small ones interesting."

Schopenhauer

"My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of written word to make you hear, to make you feel——it is, before all, to make you see That —— and no more, and it is everything."

Conrad

"The phantasmagorical world of novels and of opium."

Matthew Arnold

"Novels are to love as fairy-tales to dreams."

S.T. Coleridge

26 The Pychological Novel

Unlike the dramatist, the novelist can intrude himself between the reader and the story by commenting upon and describing the inner feelings of his characters. In this way he satisfies the curiosity of the reader who wishes to know from time to time more particularly how the character feels in a given situation, how he reacts to a particular predicament, what conflicts arise in him with regard to his course of action, what are his motives for acting as he does—and so in general how his feelings and mental processes in a given situation reflect his general character. This detailed presentation of his feelings and mental processes is what in fiction is called psychology. It may be a very different thing from psychology as understood by the students of psychology. But the origin of the word is clear, and its application in literature means that element in the narrative art which concern the psyche, that is, the subjective aspect of experience; and the novel in which this analysis of the mental process plays a significant role is called the 'Psychological Novel.'

This disposition to concern itself with the subjective aspect of experience is seen in the novels of Richardson. He deals with the human heart and reveals the feelings and motives of the people as they are manifested in the daily routine of their lives. When George Santsbury concludes in "The English Novel" that '*Pamela*' is indeed the first novel, he does so because the only answer he can give to the question, 'where are we to find a probable human being, worked out to the same degree before?" is—'Nowhere'. There are many equally probable and perhaps more interesting characters in literature before Pamela, but there is none whose daily thoughts and feelings we know so intimately.

The process of psychological analysis, initiated by Richardson, was adopted by Fielding, the greatest philosophical and satirical novelist of the eighteenth century. In '*Tom Jones*', for example, he wants us to understand why that mean fellow, Bilfil, knowing that Sophia Western disliked him, and not being properly in love with her himself, stiil insisted on courting her. The psychology of the character is generalised so that the reader may see how his reactions to the present situation fall in with his general and moral make-up :

"Though Mr. Bilfil was not of the complexion of Jones, nor ready to eat every woman he saw ; yet he was far from being destitute of that appetite which is said to be the common property of all animals".

Fielding was distinctly the most philosophical of eighteenth century novelists, and we do not again counter anything comparable to his psychological analysis until we come to those highly philosophical novelists of the nineteenth century George Eliot and George Meredith These writers are indeed more given to psychology than Fielding, who creates by comparison the impression of being a bold and simple narrator of action. There is something in their manner of psychological analysis which interferes more with the flow and naturalness of story than we find in Fielding.

George Eliot often goes behind the apparent motive to something lying deeper in the consciousness which is the chief factor in the determination of character. Thus in the reflections of Arthur in '*Adam Bede*' she points out how behind such an explicit resolution lay an implicit one of which Arthur was hardly aware, or how, still deeper down, "there was a motive at work' under such and such an attitude 'which had a sort of backstairs influence not admitted to himself."

It is Lydgate and Dorothea who give '*Middlemarch*' its most significant passages of psychological 'study'. In them we are confronted with a new range and depth of spiritual consciousness. Dorothea represents the needs of the individual for self-development. She is the character most definitely in rebellion against the universal apathy of her surroundings. The society in which she lives does not provide nourishment for her hunger. It expects her to satisfy herself with marriage, but fails to provide an opportunity for such a marriage as would be likely to satisfy her. In the story of Lydgate the problem of individual development is examined under different circumstances. He fails not through lack of opportunity, but through lack of balance and through making an unfortunate marriage. It is not simply chance that defeats him but chance in collobaration with character.

One of the peculiarities of George Eliot as a psychologist is that she is concerned with the psychological mechanism of the processes which she is exhibiting. Meredith is not concerned with the technical aspect of psychology. But he is even more given than George Eliot to tracing the subtle 'twists of heart', wherein lies the comedy of the sentiments. His psychological analysis is more difficult to follow and much more difficult to describe.

In Meredith the psychological process is a sophisticated affair, involving what he calls 'highly civilized people', that is, people more than ordinarily concerned with purely subjective values. They are sentimentalists. What they seek more than all else is to feel good

about themselves, and they do not depend on the ordinary objective standards for measuring their own worth——they are past masters in the art of manipulating their sentiments so as to give them the appearance of the utmost elevation and refinement. '*The Egoist*' is nothing but a fine exposure of sentimental sophistications.

The psychological novel has reached its peak in the stream of consciousness novels of James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. The psychological problem concern the nature of consciousness and its relation to time. Modern psychology has made it very difficult for the novelist to think of consciousness as moving in a straight chronological line from one point to the next. He tends rather to see it as altogether fluid, existing simultaneously at several different levels. To modern novelists and readers who look at consciousness in this way, the presentation of a story on a straight chronological line becomes unsatisfactory and unreal. People are what they are because of what they have been. We are memories, and to describe us truthfully at any given movement means to say something about our past. The method to describe this consciousness in operation is called the stream of consciousness method. In such a novel the main characters are not brought through a series of testing circumstances in order to reveal their potentialities. Everything about the character is always there, at some level of his consciousness, and it can be revealed by the author by probing depthwise rather than proceeding lengthwise.

Since the stream of consciousness novelists like Virginia Woolf believe that the individual's reaction to any given situation is determined by the sum of his past experiences, it follows that everyone is in some sense a prisoner of his own individuality. It, therefore, means that 'reality' itself is a matter of personal impression rather than public systematisation, and thus real communication between individuals is impossible. In such a world of loneliness, there is no scope for love, because each personality, being determined by past history, is unique. That is why modern novelist regards love as a form of selfishness or at least as something much more complicated and problematical than simple affection between two persons. Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway rejected Peter Welsh, the man she really loved, because of the fear that his possessive love would destroy her own personality.

The 'stream of consciousness' novelists are also innovators in the sense that they do not care a fig for a well-knit and compact plot. Life is chaotic, incomplete and confusing. Why should life become so well-knit, trimmed, logical and ordered then in a novel? So, in order to keep the novel closer to reality, the illusionary objective pattern and the frame work of the novel are disposed off for catching the flux in the character's mind. Virginia Woolf makes a spirited defence of the lack of pattern in her novels, in her essay. *The Modern Novel*, Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged ; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding as from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit

whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible ?"

The 'stream of consciousness' novelists try to annihilate the time factor. David Daiches remarks in his book *The Novel and the Modern World* : "In presenting the character's reactions to events, the author shows us states of mind being modified by associations and recollections deriving from the present situation but referring to a constantly shifting series of events in the past." Virginia Woolf follows this technique in her memorable novel '*Mrs. Dalloway*'.

James Joyce, a prodigious creative mind, has punctiliously employed the stream of consciousness technique in his multi-dimensional novel '*Ulysses*'. 'Ulysses' is not only a criticism of modern life with 'its sick, hurry and divided aims', but also a parody of Homer's '*Odyssey*'.

Prof. Ifor Evans remarks : "The novel is a story told in a special way. With Joyce there is a danger that 'the special way' has overlaid the story altogether, and without the story fiction cannot live." He thinks that it is only the novel of characters and manners that will outlive these methods. We can only leave this "imaginative shorthand" to time and await its decision, but time is the slowest critic of us all.

27 Self-seeking in Fiction OR The Autobiographical Novel

"Novel" to quote the admirable words of Jane Austen, "is that form of work in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language". The novelist seeks his inspiration both from his observation of life as well as from his personal experiences. His imagination apprehends reality in such a way as to present us with a new vision of it. But he cannot keep himself away from his work of art. Leslie Stephen has rightly said : "Every writer consciously or unconsciously puts himself into his novels and exhibits his own character even more distinctly than that of his heroes". Somerset Maugham repeats this very truth when he remarks : "All the characters that we create are but copies of ourselves".

In order that a work of fiction may have a deep and abiding personality, it is necessary that the novelist should present characters in the novel with whom he has been familiar in life, and introduce experiences which he might himself have undergone. A kind of subjectivity becomes an inevitable necessity for the novelist if he wants to win applause and a permanent place in the heart of his readers. A purely objective attitude towards his art, wherein the novelist will present a detached picture of life without personal involvement, does not ultimately go forward with the readers. A novelist cannot say it in the language of Christopher Isherwood : "I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording not thinking". Even Flaubert, the high priest of art for art's sake, who once said, "Let us climb to the top of our ivory tower to the last step, the nearest to heaven", had to come down from the high tower to experience personally the feelings and characters that he sought to present in "*Madam Bovary*". He himself suffered the physical symptoms of arsenic poisoning when he was writing about the suicide of Madam Bovary.

The reason why the characters and stories of Jane Austen and Dickens are so appealing is that these novelists personally lived and experienced the life they had depicted in their novels. No trace of artificiality could taint their portraiture. When they went out of their way in describing characters and presenting life unfamiliar to

them, they stumbled and cut a sorry figure. When Jane Austen sought to picture high romance and Dickens high aristocratic life, they failed because they had little experience of the life they sought to introduce in their novels.

So far is written about the personal experience of the novelist in the presentation of the life and atmosphere of his novels. Coming to character portrayal, it can be said without the fear of being contradicted by anyone that the great source of character-creation is the novelist ownself. Henry James says : "The material for any picture is drawn from the designer's own mind". 'Know Thyself' is the novelist's first maxim and the novelist with the widest range as a creator of character is he who contains within himself the greatest variety of potential selves.

Novelists invariably and involuntarily write about others apropos of themselves. E.M. Forster says that a novel is based upon evidence plus an 'unknown quantity' which is the temperament of novelist, and 'that unknown quantity always modifies the evidence and sometimes transforms it entirely". Once we admit a temperament with power to transform the evidence, the autobiograghical element becomes inevitable. A writer's attitude towards life, the sum total of his beliefs and experiences, is as much a part of his work as the story itself.

It is not easy to say exactly when readers first began to understand that fiction had an egoistic basis ; but it is certain that familiarity with the Russian novel accelerated the process. Dostoevsky was the first writer to make fiction autobiographical. Edward Hallet Carr who sees danger 'in seeking autobiographical material in professed works of fiction' had to admit that in the case of Dostoevsky the novel has been used to express the author's ideas or to resolve and sooth his personal dilemmas He projects his own love of gambling in the hero of the '*Gambler*', 'whose utterances are autobiographical in every detail". The sombre background of '*Crime and Punishment*' is but a dim reflection of the black gloom of despair in which its tortured pages were written.

It would be more difficult for a defender of objective fiction to deny the autobiographical character of Tolstoy's work. Tolstoy uses dramatisation, projection and all the other machinery of subjectivity in his work. Levin in '*Anna Karenina*' and Nekhlyudov in '*Resurrection*' are self-portraits.

Coming to the English novel, we have the first glimpses of autobiographical fiction in Bunyan and Goldsmith. In "*Grace Abounding*", Bunyan depicts the story of his own conversion in a simple and sincere manner. Goldsmith in the "*Vicar of Wakefield*" has presented himself through the personality of Dr. Primrose, the honest Vicar who always believes in the doctrine of monogamy. All the sufferings and misfortunes that reduce the Vicar to nothingness are the sufferings that Goldsmith himself had to bear in his life.

Fielding was a life-long enemy of Walpole the Prime Minister, and his antipathy and hatred for Walpole has been presented furtively through the life-story of "*Jonathan Wild*". Smollett's personal life and his views about humanity are presented in. '*Roderick Random*' In many ways, Roderick is the idealisation of Smollett's own conception of life. For him, friendship and love are thin disguises for self-interest, and he believes that fraud, chicanery and lust are governing principles of human relationships. All these views and ideas have been typically presented in the character of Roderick.

Charles Dickens is an unabashed subjectiviser and he largely draws on his own experiences and observation. '*David Copperfield*', the most generally admired of his novels, is autobiographical in character. He knew this and when he finished the novel he admitted that "he was in danger of wearing the reader with personal confidences and private emotions". His early knowledge of the low life of London supplied material for "*Oliver Twist*", and his school days gave him the material for "*Nicholas Nichleby*". The personal experiences of Dickens always form the warp and woof of his novels and in them he presents characters personally known to him.

George Eliots' novels are saturated with personal experiences. "*Adam Bede*" is based on the memories of her childhood. In "*Mill on the Floss*", the experiences of George Eliot provide the fabric of the novel and the study of Maggie Tulliver and her brother Tom is a reflection of her (Eliots') own relationship with her brother, Issac. Tom, like Issac, is a prosaic youth, narrow of imagination and intellect. Maggie, like George Eliot herself, is an intelligent girl, having intense sensibility and artistic tastes. In fact all George Eliots' heroines——Maggie Tulliver, Esther Lyon, Dorothea Brooke and Romola——are representations of the different shades of her own life.

Coming to the modern novel, we find the autobiographical fiction quite in prominence. There is no more direct contemporary example of this form of self re-creation than that of H.G. Wells. His "*Love and Mr. Lewisham*" contains much autobiographical material drawn from his life as a teacher. Many of the best chapters of '*Kipps*', '*The History of Mr. Polly*' and '*The Wheels of Chance*' owe their inspiration to his days as a shop-assistant.

Joseph Conrad, the sea novelist, continuously dramatises himself in the concept of an imaginative hero who is moved to the kind of action which he (Conrad) desired but failed to achieve except in art. The over-careful story telling is threaded with reflections of an ego which was always under self-observation. In '*Lord Jim*', we can have a vivid picture of Conrad himself and his love for sea life.

In fact, it is subjective rather than objective fiction which has commanded great appreciation in the present day world where people are interested in studying the inner conflicts and motives of the characters than in mere objective representation of adventures. The reader has begun to feel that the real elements of any work of fiction are the elements of the author's personality. Hence from the reader's point of view, the author's life and experiences become more important than the characters he produces and presents. Let us conclude this essay with the quotation of Henry James. He says : "The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist is that there is no limit to what he may attempt——no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries and success".

28 Victorian Novel

Novel's breadth and elasticity has always fascinated the attention of the men of letters. It is a vehicle of ideas as well as the means of amusement. The novel in the nineteenth century rapidly became the maid-of-all-work of literature, and the most popular instrument of presenting an extended argument on social, political and religious questions. The spread of science made it realistic and analytical; the spread of democracy made it social and humanitarian. Thus novel expanded on all sides until it became practically co-extensive with all the aspects and activities of the Victorian Age, and the index of many-sided interests and conflicting elements which shaped the civilization of this era. As a matter of fact, the Victorian novel is one of the main achievements in English literature, comparable with the Elizabethan drama.

Charles Dickens is undoubtedly the greatest novelist of the Victorian age. Humour and humanity are two outstanding characteristics of his art. He harnessed his pen for the amelioration of the pathetic conditions of the poor factory workers, little children groaning under the whips of tyrannical school-masters, litigants moving about law courts without getting any justice, and prisoners subjected to the hardships of rigorous prison life. In his novels, the reformative zeal is particularly emphasised. After the publication of Oliver Twist, Nickolas Nickleby, Bleak House and David Copperfield, he was, to quote Prof. Gross, 'the greatest social reformer for full thirty years.'

Humour is the stuff and substance of Dickens' mental constitution and the essence of his art. Without his humour, he might have been a vigorous advocate of social reform but as a novelist assuredly he would have failed. Dicken's humour does not reflect the intellectual repartee of Benedick and Beatrice, but it creates uproarious, vivacious and rocking laughter. His gift of humour is inseparable from his gift of pathos. Like the "Essays of Elia" his novels are replete with a happy agglomeration of humour and pathos.

Dickens is a master in the art of characterization and presents a wide variety of characters in his novels. He is, to borrow Dr. Johnson's remark for Fanney Burney, "the greatest character

monger." His concern is not with man, but with men. But he cannot portray serious characters ; psychologically complex characters are beyond his range and scope.

Dickens' novels have a serious drawback. They are incoherent and lack unity. They are marked with discursiveness and diffuseness. There are elaborate passages of description and redundant details which do not seem to have a bearing on the development of the story. Though he is not a master of plot construction, yet as a narrator of the tales he is admirable. David Cecil says : "He may not constract the story well, but he tells it admirably."

Dickens is not a great and consummate literary artist, not a great psychological writer, not a seductive story-teller, but he is the greatest of the national novelists of England. A man of the people who wrote for the people, he is the spokesman of the masses and the creator of the democratic novel. Happy benignity, radiant humanity, and intense sympathy mark off the novels of Dickens as great.

Thackeray's importance in the development of the English novel lies in his resolute use of realism. His characters are presented as he saw them, untouched by sentiment on one hand, and on the other free of the touch of caricature which Dickens found irresistible. As Thackeray's vision was pessimistic, his best novels deal with the moral weaknesses of humanity. But his pessimism cannot be mistaken for cynicisim. He must be praised for his courage in presenting life as it is. As a novelist, Thackeray was completely inhibited where the portrayal of women and of sex was concerned. For a novelist purporting to give a realistic representation of men and women in society, this was fatal. In the presence of "good women", Thackeray's satire is suspended in favour of his sentimentality. But when he deals with the social life of man purely and simply, he is unassailable, and no novel is richer than "Vanity Fair" in beauties of sharp, satirical characterization embodied in incisive scenes and swift and flawless dialogues.

Thackeray never cared for a coherent and unified plot. Most of his novels are rambling in their discourse and are very loosely constructed. They lack homogeneity and perspective are excessively discursive.

Among the novelists of the Victorian Age, Trollope occupies a distinguished position. His superiority to his contemporaries is mainly negative, he did not make their mistakes. His positive superiority resolves itself into one quality——he observed the surface of life more accurately than they did. But he is not a theoretical realist like Zola ; he does not use the novel form as a means of giving his reader a documented account of facts. Unlike his contemporaries, he seeks to make his effects, not by embroidering fantasies on a ground of experience like Dickens, but simply by reproducing experience as exactly as possible. At the same time, he

is conscious of the fact that novel is a means of entertainment. He gives due consideration to this fact in his art.

Trollope's vigilant sense of reality prevents him from dividing his characters in comic and serious as his contemporaries did. People are not exclusively comic or tragic in real life, nor are they in Trollope. They are not exclusively good or bad either. Even his worst characters have their good points.

Trollope has little skill in plot construction, but his plots are as probable as his characters. They may be ill-constructed, he may twist them to provide a happy ending, but his unfailing grip on reality enables him to do so without ever making them seem unlikely.

Charlotte Bronte, Emile Bronte, and Anne Bronte ——— The Bronte Sisters ——— occupy a distinctive place in the history of English fiction. They are pioneer leaders in the field of romanticizing English fiction and concentrating on the revelation of the soul and the inner working of the human spirit. Instead of presenting the picture of a society or group of people such as we find in Jane Austen and the earlier novelists, they look in their hearts and write of things with which they are most familiar. By introducing poetry, passion, imagination and nature in fiction, they have made it a thing of wonder and delight. 'Jane Eyre' and 'Wuthering Heights' have a conspicuous place in the list of Victorian novels.

Meredith is a great psychological and intellectual novelist. His general theme is the eternal one of comedy, the clash between illusion and reality, and the central character's painful progress to knowledge of reality and himself. His fantasy, though it distorts the novels when seen as a panorama of society, serves his purpose, which is to disengage and expose his characters at highly significant moments in their careers. And his attitude to his characters differs according to their sex : the men, even when the object of his satire, are transformed by his wit ; the women by his poetry. His mind was naturally lofty, and his work "Diana of Crossway" is marked by a most engaging largeness of spirit. His finest work, however, is "The Egoist." There his talents are for once in perfect balance.

In his novels, he cares little for incident or plot on their own account, but uses them primarily to illustrate the activity of the 'Comic Spirit'. He loves to trace the calamities which befall those who provoke nature by obstinately running counter to her laws. Oscar Wilde once remarked : "As a novelist Meredith can do everything except to tell a story." If we regard the novel as a tale, pure and simple, an arresting and convincing chronicle of events, Meredith must inevitably appear a colossal failure. From the point of narration, every novel that he wrote was not merely faulty but downright bad.

Meredith gave a new form to the novel. It is the novel turned 'lyrical-comical'. Novel in his hands became a blend of two elements ———— poetry and comedy, rising to lyrical ecstasy never reached by any Victorian novelist.

The novel is humanitarian in the hands of Dickens, and satiric in the hands of Thackeray. But in the hands of George Eliot, it has become moral and philosophical. With her, fiction is no longer a mere entertainment ; it strikes a new note of seriousness and even of sternness ; it has turned into a searching review of the grave as well as the pleasant aspects of human existence.

George Eliot is a moralist at heart, and the tone of her novels is one of moral earnestness. As a moralist, she lays great emphasis on the performance of one's duty and leading a life of virtue and righteousness. If a person deviates from the track of righteousness, he is likely to be swallowed up by the swirling waves of moral turpitude leading to his utter ruin. In her view, every man's character is in his own hand to mould into the right shape or wrong, and she desires that man's full strength should be devoted to the formation of right conduct and right thought. "As you sow, so shall you reap" is the cardinal principle of her moral concept.

George Eliot is a psychological novelist and the primary object of her art as a novelist is to lay bare the souls of her characters. Like Browning, she attempts to represent the conflict of a soul, and to reveal the motives, impulses and hereditary influences which govern human action. She tries to pierce behind the show of things and to reveal the forces by which they are controlled. She is a rationalist and a philosophic thinker and she has brought to bear on the novel a highly skilled intellect, a probing mind and a searching analytical faculty.

George Eliot's characters are dominated and governed by moral considerations. Her concentration on the moral side of human nature is the chief source of her greatness as a novelist, the kernel of her precious contribution to literature. Her excellence as a portrayer of characters lies in her power and capacity to present the gradual evolution of her characters. Her characters are never fixed. They continue to grow either for the worse or for the better. They are never static. She says, "Character too is a process." George Eliot, being a psychologist, can successfully draw complex characters like Maggie and Tito.

George Eliot has worked out her plots in confirmity with her idea, giving all kinds of jolts and jerks to the expectation of the reader roused by the theory of probability of action under a particular set of circumstances. Her story is conditioned solely by the logical demands of the situation or character. In fact, the laws conditioning form of George Eliot's novels are the same laws that condition those of Henry James, Wells and Conrad. Her's are the first examples in English literature of the novel in its mature form ; in them it structurally comes of age.

Hardy, the prominent Victorian novelist, has given a new depth and gravity to the English novel. Like Meredith, he is at heart a poet and expresses himself also in verse. But unlike Meredith whose attitude to life is optimistic, and who has written comedies, Hardy's attitude to life is rather pessimistic and he has written tragedies. Hardy thinks that there is some malignant power which controls the universe, and which is out to thwart and defeat man in all his plans. It is especially hostile to those who try to assert themselves and have their own way. Thus his novels are the work of a man painfully dissatisfied with the existing pattern of things.

On account of Hardy's philosophy of a malignant power which rules the universe in accordance with its whims, his novels are full of coincidences. In fact, chance plays too large a part in his novels. In real life, chance sometimes helps a men also; but in Hardy's novels chance always comes as an upsetting force.

Hardy has given to novel a new and impressive architectural pattern, building it carefully with a great deal of foresight and skill. As a critic has pointed out: "He was an architect by profession, and left the impression of his professional proficiency on his novels." There is an architectonic quality in his plot construction. The plots are well-knit in spite of the presence of chance element and strange co-incidences.

Hardy's creative power is best exhibited in the portrayal of characters. He did not adopt the psychological method of character portrayal which had been popularised by George Eliot and Meredith. He laid greater emphasis on the emotional side of his characters than on their intellectual side. Hardy being a poet and delineator of emotional characters achieved eminent success in the portrayal of lovers impelled by passion and emotion. He has given a rich picture of human character in his novels.

Certain modern critics complain against Victorian novels for their lack of realism. According to these critics, the Victorian novels sentimentalize life, and fail to tell the whole truth about it. The business of art is to present life, the real point of life, and for that selection is necessary, since a great deal of life is off the point. It must clear away the surpluses of the irrelevant, the inessential, the inorganic. It must provide an interpretation of life. The real objection of the modern critics is that the Victorians were not ugly enough. They did not believe that sex was the most important thing in the world. The Victorian novels represent a world in which the selective power of art is at work. They are not mere transcripts of life——they are interpretations.

29 Modern Novel

The novel is the most important and popular literary medium in the modern times. The modern age is essentially the age of novel. The publication of a new novel by a great novelist is received now with the same enthusiastic response as a new comedy by Dryden or Congreve was received in the Restoration period and a new volume of poems by Tennyson during the Victorian Period. Poetry which had for many centuries held the supreme place in the realm of literature, has its that position Its appeal to the general public is now negligible, and it has been obviously superseded by fiction.

Let us consider the main characteristics of the modern novel. In the first place, we can say that it is realistic as opposed to idealistic. The 'realistic' writer is one who thinks that affiliation to observed facts facts about the outer world, or facts about his feelings is the great thing, while the idealistic writer wants rather to create a pleasant and an edifying picture. The modern novelist is realistic in an extensive sense, and tries to include within the limits of the novel almost everything of contemporary life. Tolstoy's '*War and Peace* and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*' made novels as supple and versatile as life itself. The modern novelists have continued this experiment till further, and are trying to make the novel more elegant and flexible Under the influence of Flaubert and Turgeneve, some modern novelists like Henry James have taken great interest in refining the construction of the novel and purging it of superfluous materials.

In the second place, the modern novel is psychological. Modern psychology has made it very difficult for the novelist to think of consciousness as moving in a straight chronological line from one point to the next. He tends rather to see it as altogether fluid, existing simultaneously at several different levels. To the modern novelists and readers who look at consciousness in this way, the presentation of a story in a straight chronological line becomes unsatisfactory and unreal. People are what they are because of what they have been. Man is a collection of memories ; any truthful description must involve the detailed presentation of his past. This method to describe the consciousness in operation is called "the stream of consciousness method."

Besides being psychological and realistic, the modern novelist is also frank especially about sexual matters. This is rather an inevitable result of the acceptance of the 'stream of consciousness technique'. Sometimes a striking sexual frankness is used by writers like D H. Lawrence to evade social and moral problems. An elaborate technique for catching the flavour of every moment helps to avoid coming into grips with acute problems facing the society.

Moreover, on account of the disintegration of society, and an absence of a common basis of values, the modern novelist cannot believe that his impressions hold good for others. So whereas Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray wrote for the general public, the modern novelist considers it as an enemy, and writes for a small group of people who share his individual sensibilities and are opposed to the society at large. E.M. Forster call it the "little society" as opposed to the "great society". Now let us have a brief survey of the modern novelists.

H.G. Wells is the greatest revolutionary among the writers of the twentieth century, and, like Bernard Shaw the has exerted a tremendous influence on the minds of his contemporaries. The novels of Wells fall into three divisions. First he wrote scientific romances —— *The Time Machine*, '*The War of the Worlds*', etc. In these novels, he looks at life from the higher level by projecting himself to a distant standpoint, to the moon, the future, the air, or another planet. Next he tried his hands on the domestic novels ——'*Kipps*', *Tono Bungay*, *The History of Mr. Polly*', etc, In these novels, he paints the picture of contemporary society, especially its disintegration. In his later life, Wells wrote sociological novels—— '*The New Machiavelli*', '*The Undying Fire*, '*Mr. Brittling sees it Through.*' In these novels, he shows concern with the fate of humanity as a whole. Well's mental make-up is replete with the scientific spirit. He believes that human civilisation can survive only if people discipline their instincts by means of reason.

Henry James is an American naturalised in England. It is, perhaps, on account of his foreign origin that he has remained untouched by the pessimism of the age, whereas almost all his contemporaries show unmistakable signs of depression. Moreover, his characters have no background, and they move from one country to another. The emphasis is more on their mental and emotional reactions. In his earlier novels such as *The Europeans*' Henry James is chiefly concerned with the clash between the American and European mind. In his next important novel, '*What Masie Knew*', he gives us an exquisitely delightful picture of a young American girl brought up in the sentimental Victorian surroundings and introduced to a modern society entirely devoid of sentiment. His later novels, like *The Golden Bowl*', deal with the similar simple situations, pregnant with the most complex psychological effects. The main contribution of Henry James to the technique of the novel is the use of narrative at second hand. Through this method, the story unfolds itself completely in the mental plane. His style expresses the exact shade of emotion or apprehension which

he wishes to convey. The later psychological novelists, Virginia Wollf and James Joyce, have been greatly influenced by Henry James' style as well as the indirect technique of narration.

Joseph Conrad is a pole who writes in English. He has learned the attitude of detachment and an acute observation of environment from the French novelists, Flaubert and Maupassant. From Turgenev and Dostoevsky, he has imbibed a cosmopolitan outlook, and also a love for portrayirg characters who are in conflict with themselves, are frustrated by their own passions and impulses, and who, on account of having missed their lives' purpose, become introvert and find their outlet in crime. The masterpieces of Conrad are : '*The Nigger of the Narcissus*', '*Lord Jim, Typhoon*', and '*Nostromo*'. We have in them man's conflict with the internal sea, his avarice for fabulous wealth, and the tribal wars among savages. The characters in them are not refined or fashionable people : they become slave to their peculiar idiosyncrasies. They have tormented souls and often border on tragedy. In all these novels, Conrad exhibits the great ideals of impartiality, practical wisdom, sense of fitness and freedom from sentimentality.

E.M. Forster occupies an exceptional place in the history of modern novels. He has written only five novels, '*Where Angles Feared to Tread*'. '*The Longest Journey*, '*A Room with a View*, '*Howard's End* and '*A Passage to India.*' In all Forster's novels there is a conflict between good and evil, between what is cruel, philistine and unperceiving, and the good which is lively, entertaining and sensitive. He wants a harmonious development of man in which, there is combination of body and spirit, season and emotion, work and play, laughter and seriousness. He believes that the aim of civilized life is to enhance the quality of personal relations. This can be achieved not by pomp and power and aggressiveness in the personality, but by gentle and quiescent qualities. In all his novels, Forster has expressed and strongly affirmed his faith in the individual, and it is this fundamental element in his novel which has given him a place of exceptional honour among the English novelists.

James Joyce is a novelist of unique and extraordinary genius. He has done the pioneering work in the 'stream of consciousness' technique. The important novels of Joyce are '*The Dubliners*', '*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', *Exiles*', and '*Ulyssees*', Of these '*Ulysses*' is his masterpiece. In all these novels, Joyce makes a study of the artist who frees himself from various shackles and ultimately comes to the realisation of his own personality. In '*Ulysses*' the artist is shown at one with humanity through insight into the psychology of speech, our most intimate faculty, in which all men share and have shared.

Virginia Woolf, the most distinguished woman writer of her generation, has made a far more exciting use of the 'stream of consciousness' technique than James Joyce. She ignores the outer personality regarding it simply as the 'semi-transparent envelope' through which she

could study the reality, namely, the thoughts, feelings and impressions as they quicken into life. She depicts in her novels the staff of life ——thoughts, feelings and impressions——steeped in the richest dyes of her imagination and turned into images of her poetic sensibility. Her important novels are '*The Voyage Out, Night and Day Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway* '*Between the Acts* In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the typical 'stream of consciousness' novel, Virginia Woolf explores and recreates the personality of a middle-aged woman, Mrs Dalloway. Here she sets down the incidents of a day in her life accompanied by visual, mental and emotional impressions. The day in her life is expressed in terms of a long, interior monologue, the smooth flowing of the stream of consciousness, which is interrupted by the striking hours of the clock.

Aldous Huxley is concerned with the search for a workable faith in the bewildering world of today ; and this faith must be one justifiable by logical argument, not merely by appeals to feeling or tradition. Though he lacks the imaginative power of Lawrence, and the poetic sensitivity of Virginia Woolf, he is better intellectually equipped than either. He represents the small percentage of the people of his generation who are in possession of ideas. In his early novels, *Crime Yellow, Antic Hay* and *Those Barren Leaves*, Huxley presents the dangerous, attractive doctrine of hedonism, that is, pleasure is the greatest thing in life. In *Point Counter Point* he studies the frustration brought about by the conflict between passion and reason. In *Brave New World*, he accomplishes the combination of scientific materialism and hedonism, and searches for a new faith in spiritualism. In his later novels—— *Ends and Means, Grey Eminence* and *After Many a Summer*——Huxley accepts the existence of supreme and one reality and believes that we are bound to this world of illusion through desire which springs from self-hood. Huxley has not made any notable contribution to the technique of the novel. His novels are in fact essays and conversations strung together on a slender thread of plot. But he has done for the novel what Shaw has done for the drama ; that is, he has made the novel a form capable of propagating great ideas and thus making an appeal to the intellect rather than the emotions of the reader. He has turned fiction into an image of the dynamic world of ideas that underlies the changing outward society.

D.H. Lawrence is a great and original writer who has brought a new kind of poetic imagination to English novel. To the man in the street Lawrence is still a 'sex novelist'. But he himself says : "I, who loath sexuality so deeply, am considered a lurid sexuality specialist". Lawrence is a passionate Puritan, and his sexual idea is high and lofty. He believes that there can be no satisfying union on physical plane alone. "Once a man establishes a full dynamic communication at the deeper and higher centres with a woman, this can never be broken . . . very often not even death can break it. If man makes sex itself his goal, he drives on towards anarchy and despair, and his living purpose collapses. Sex is the door. Beyond lies an ultimate, impersonal relationship, free of all emotional complications". The important

novels of Lawrence are : "*The White Peacoak, The Rainbow, Sons and Lovers, Woman in Love* and *Lady Chatterly's Lover.* Regarding the modern civilization, Lawrence believes that man has cut himself off from the living cosmos, which is God. Without the restoration of that contact society will perish. But this cannot be brought about by the mind, which is at the centre of all mischief We should have more trust in our flesh and blood than the intellect.

Somerset Maugham is another great novelist of this century. He believes in working in a narrow life and his method is 'naturalistic' as that of Maupaussant. His important novels are : *Liza of Lambath Of Human Bondage, Cakes and Ale* and *The Razor's Edge.* Somerset Maugham is equally famous as a dramatist and short-story writer.

30

Novel as the Interpretation of Life

The novel, being a form of literature, interprets life. Like drama, the novel is diiectly concerned with life —— with men and women, and their relationships, with the thoughts and feelings, the passions and motives by which they are governed or impelled, with their joys and sorrows, their successes and failures. Just as Prof. Moulton has observed that "every play of Shakespeare, critically examined, turns out to be microcosm, of which the author is the creator and the plot the providential scheme," in the same manner every novel is a microcosm and the plot the providential scheme. A novel is not simply a piece of entertainment. That is its more superficial side, and it is merely a means for capturing the interest of his readers. What is important to the novelist is the view of life he has drawn from his experience of men and things. Unlike the scientist who is the concerned with the theory and practice of physical process, the novelist is concerned with the theory and practice of the process of living. It is with the purpose of making the reader appreciate his 'view' or his 'theory' of what inspires human action and human judgment, that the novelist carries through his experiment on imagined human beings. Whereas the scientist is in search of physical truth, the author is in search of human truth. His view of truth may be right or wrong, but it is there for what it is worth for all his readers to understand and appreciate. Great novelists like Hardy, Henry James, Aldous Huxley, to name a few, —— all have a distinctive viewpoint running through their work. It may slightly change and undergo certain development in their successive novels, but it is there, and it makes its presence felt. This view-point of the author is the essence of the sum total of his experience of life.

Like the poet, the novelist interprets life by means of imaginative synthesis. He brings his characters into imaginative action by placing them in situations in which they mould themselves. In this process he is guided and influenced by his own experience of life, his own analysis of the multitude of experiences through which he has passed, suffused with the feelings which they evoked. The whole of life as he has encountered gradually takes on a shape, an order, even a pattern, and it is this pattern which helps him to analyse the

motives of his characters, their response to the new situations which he creates, and the significance of those situations.

The characters in a novel are not created out of nothing; they are the writer himself, and his human environment. The novelist writes for the public of his time. He does not write either for the past or for the future, but for the present. Thus while creating his characters, he is also writing a social document. The content of a novel is part of the content of society in which the novelist lives. This is true of the novels of Dickens, Jane Austen, Hardy, George Eliot and other great novelists. The novelist himself is involved in contemporary values. He has lived, thought and acted and he has observed others doing so. All this leaves a certain impression on his mind, gives him an insight into life, which is bound to influence the characters he creates in his novels. It is this insight of the novelist into life which gives reality to his characters, because he shows them as struggling with life, being torn in judgment, getting confused in thought, and wrecked in feeling, as he himself has done so, or seen others doing. When a novel is read in intimate seclusion to one's own thoughts, the reader also battles through the bit of life which the author presents, in company with the characters. As the reader is real, the characters in a good novel must become real to his imagination. The viewpoint of the novelist is transferred to his characters, which in turn becomes the possession of the reader.

Thus all great novels interpret life, and present a particular point of view of the novelist. We may call it a philosophy of life. The great novelists have been great thinkers and very keen observers of life. They are full of ripe wisdom and mature understanding of the baffling problems of life. All these naturally give an ethical, philosophical and moral bias to their novels. How important this philosophical element is in a novel is clear from the fact that in the discussion of all great novels we find ourselves involved in the discussion of life itself.

But that does not mean that while interpreting life in his novels, a novelist deliberately makes an attempt to expound a set body of ethical doctrines, or contrives his story as an embodiment of certain ideas about life. A novelist is first a man of literature, and as such he is more concerned with presenting the concrete facts of life, rather than with the discussion of abstract philosophical principles, which is the business of philosopher. His aim is not philosophical, though his work is bound to have philosophical significance, because his own point of view about life is sure to guide him, consciously or unconsciously, in the arrangement of his plot and the treatment of his characters.

The novelist's point of view or his philosophy or his moral system is presented by him in his novel in two ways. In the first place, like the dramatist, the novelist interprets life by merely representing it. By selecting certain materials out of the mass

which life offers to him, by arranging them in such a manner as to bring certain facts and forces into prominence, by exhibiting character and motive under certain lights, and conducting his plot, he indicates his own point of view or philosophy of life. In the second place, the novelist, unlike the dramatist who can use only the indirect method, can supplement it by direct personal commentary, and explanation. He can, as it were, step before the curtain, explain the action, analyse the characters and their motives and discuss moral questions suggested by them. He takes upon himself the role of the critic also by systematising and formulating his thoughts.

Though every great novel has a moral, the novelist's chief concern must be with the concrete facts of life, without troubling himself in the least about their moral bearings. If he attempts to write a novel especially with the purpose of making out a case or to prove a set thesis, and give it the form of an essay in philosophy, then he will be a failure. His philosophy or moral point of view should be wraught in the very texture of the novel. The novelist must never indulge in the liberty of inculcating his lessons directly like a preacher. He should exhibit life, portray his characters, and weave his plot in such a manner that the moral is quite imperceptibly brought home. In Goldsmiths '*The Vicar of Wakefield*', the great moral of the book is conveyed through the beautiful and sympathetic portrayal of courage, piety and faith in God under stress of accumulated affliction. It is this, and not any conventional summing up of the moral lesson, which makes Goldsmith high among the moralists of the eighteenth century.

Great art or literature cannot afford to run counter to the moral truths which are the basis of the very existence of humanity. To be truly great, all art must be moralised, and be in harmony with the right principles of conduct and tone of feelings, which preserve mankind and help its progress. Of course, an artist should not analyse and instruct like an ethical teacher or philosopher ; he embodies the great truths and principles of life in his art, and conveys them in a delightful manner. The greater the art, the more successfully it brings about the synthesis of the complex thoughts and feelings. The greater the artist, the more complete is his grasp of human nature as a whole, and the more complete his representation of life in organised complexity. As the progress of the human race has been mostly due to its moral qualities, no great artist can be hostile to the moral dignity of man and his point of view has to be highly moral.

As the novel is a form of art, we expect a great novelist to interpret life in his novels, and also to make them an embodiment of the highest principles of morality. Like all forms of art, a novel grows out of life ; it is fed by life ; it reacts upon life. The novelist deals with life, and therefore the real greatness of his work very largely depends upon his moral power and insight and upon the whole spirit and tendency of his philosophy.

writes life reflects on him, by arranging them in such a manner as to bring certain facts and aspects into prominence, by exhibiting character and motive under certain lights, and conducting his plot he indicates his own point of view or philosophy of life. In the second place, the novelist, unlike the dramatist who can use only the indirect method, can supplement it by direct personal commentary and commentaries. He can, as it were, step before the curtain, explain the action, analyse the characters and their motives and discuss moral questions suggested by them. He takes upon himself the role of a preacher, directly systematising and formulating his thoughts.

Though every great novel has a moral, the novelist's chief concern must be with the concrete facts of life, without troubling himself in the least about their moral bearings. If he attempts to write a novel especially with the purpose of making out a case or to prove a thesis, and give it the form of an essay in philosophy, then he will be a failure. His philosophy or moral point of view should be wrought in the very texture of the novel. The novelist must never indulge in the liberty of inculcating his lessons directly like a preacher. He should exhibit life, portray his characters, and weave his plot in such a manner that the moral is quite imperceptibly brought home. In Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the great moral of the book is conveyed through the beautiful and sympathetic portrayal of courage, piety and faith in God under stress of accumulated affliction. It is this and not any conventional summing up of the moral lesson, which makes Goldsmith high among the moralists of the eighteenth century.

Great art or literature cannot afford to run counter to the moral truths which are the basis of the very existence of humanity. To be truly great, all art must be moralized, and be in harmony with the great principles of conduct and tone of feelings, which promote mankind and help its progress. Of course, an artist should not analyse and instruct like an ethical teacher or philosopher; he embodies the great truths and principles of life in his art and conveys them in a delightful manner. The greater the art, the more successfully it brings about the synthesis of the complex thoughts and feelings. The greater the artist, the more complete is his grasp of human nature as a whole, and the more complete his representation of life in organised complexity. As the progress of the world has been mainly due to its moral qualities, great art must minister to the moral dignity of man and his point of view must be highly moral.

As the novel is a form of art, we expect a great novelist to interpret life in its highness, and also to make them an embodiment of the highest principles of morality. Like all forms of art, a novel grows out of life; it is fed by life; it reacts upon life. It has to deal with life, and therefore the real greatness of his work very largely depends upon his moral power and insight and upon the whole spirit and tendency of his philosophy.

PROSE

SELECT QUOTATION

"Order, precision, directness are the cardinal merits of prose, and it is more than merely legitimate that they should form the criterion of prose style."

Walter Pater

"A wise skepticism is the first attribute of a good critic."

J. R. Lowell

"The critical taste does not depend upon a superior principle in men, but upon superior knowledge."

Edmund Burke

"Criticism, carrid to the height worth of it, is a majestic office, perhaps an art, perhaps even a church."

I. E. Spingarn.

"The torch rather than the sceptre should be my symbol for the critic. Elucidation or illumination is the critic's primary task as I condceive it."

Helen Gardner

"Style is the physiognomy of the soul."

Schopenhauer

31 The English Essay

The essay has been defined differently in different ages according to the prevalent literary standards. During the Elizabethan period, Bacon defined essay as "dispersed meditation" ; in other words, a vehicle for the expression of a man's thoughts, in a rather disconnected manner. Dr. Johnson defined essay as "a loose sally of mind : an irregular, undigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition." This definition means that the essay is an impetuous outpouring of ideas, without form and arrangement but with all the freshness of an eager mind. This conception of the essay is obviously contradictory to Bacon's ideal of the sober meditation. The modern definition of the essay, as given in the Oxford English Dictionary, is : "a composition of moderate length on a particular subject.". "A good essay, "says E.V. Lucas, "more than a novel, a poem, a play or a treatise, is personality translated into print."

Montaigne is the first writer who wrote what may technically be called essays. But the roots of his writing lie far back in literary history. He owed a great part of his inspiration to the Roman writer, Cicero, who in his turn was indebted to Plato. Bacon's position in the history of the English essay is unique and remarkable. He is undoubtedly the pioneer in this domain of English literature. To him belongs the very credit of having written essays first of all. The essays of Bacon are rational in nature and they have to do much with the head and very little with the heart. L. C. Knight goes to the extent of declaring that in Bacon we come across a dissociation of sensibility,' and that reason is supremely important in his essays. Secondly, the essays of Bacon present a philosophy of life which is essentially pragmatic in nature. He knows the art of compression and can put a whole ocean of thought in a drop of language. The following sentence from his essay 'Of Truth' would illustrate the point perfectly well——

"What is Truth ? said the jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer."

Abraham Cowley may be looked upon as the connecting link between Bacon and Addison, and his essays give us just what we miss in those of Bacon. Cowley deliberately cultivated a form of essay far

more intimate and confidential though, less profound and philosophical than the Baconian. Whatever be the subject——whether greatness, or gardens, or solitude——Cowley loved to write in the first person and his temperament was that of the born essayist.

In the Restoration Age, Dryden introduced a new variety, called the Critical Essay. Among the earliest of his essays is the "*Essay of Dramatic Poesy*" which is still the best known and contains the most elaborate exposition of his critical principles, though it is surpassed in interest by the admirable "*Preface to the Fables.*" Both these essays follow the form of Montaigne, but their theme is literary criticism. These critical essays entitle Dryden to the honour of being not only "the Father of English Criticism" but also "the first master of a prose which is adapted to the everyday needs of expression, and yet has dignity enough to rise to any point short of the topmost peaks of eloquence."

The early years of the eighteenth century saw the rise of journalism and the Essay began to appear in the periodicals. Defoe in his Review is first believed to have set the fashion, but the real vogue of the periodical essay began with the publication of "*The Tatler*" and "*The Spectator.*"

Addison is regarded as the greatest master of the Periodical Eassy. He set out to be a mild censor of the morals of the age, and most of his compositions deal with topical subjects——fashions, practical jokes, polite conversation. His avowed purpose is to "enliven morality with wit and temper wit with morality." All the essays of Addison are delightful and charming. His style is most admirably suited to his purpose. It is marked with simplicity, grace, humour, satire and irony, often mingled with a pathos which is used with admirable restraint. Macaulay has done justice to Addison when he call him "the greatest satirist, who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it." Dr. Johnson's praise of Addison's style is worth quoting: "Whosever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the periodical newspaper gave place to the critical journel, commonly called the "Review.' The most important of these reviews were: "The Gentleman's Magazine", "The Edinburgh Review", "The Quarterly Review" and "Blackwood's Magazine." The important writers who made contributions to these reviews and magazines were: Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, William Hazlitt, Thomas de Quincy, Macaulay and Matthew Arnold.

The eldest and the chief of the group was Charles Lamb, who has endeared himself to the generations of Englishmen by his "*Essays of Elia*" and "*Last Essay of Elia*". Lamb is constantly autobiographical, his whole life may be reconstructed from "*Eassys of Elia.*" He takes the reader into his confidence and conceals nothing from him. Lamb

treats romantically the homeliest stuff of life, and shows how the simplest and commonest experiences are rich in emotion and humour. But humour in Lamb is never far from tragedy ; through his tears one may see the rainbow in the sky. His humour and pathos are inseparable from each other ; they are different facets of the same gem.

Lamb's style is neither so clear nor so simple as that of his predecessors ; it is conversational, lacks both restraint and formality and is frequently rhetorical. It is yet nonetheless delightful.

One of the best known figures in Lamb's circle of friends was William Hazlitt, whose essays are still read with some of their original freshness. Hazlit's essays are divisible into two classes——essays on literary criticism and essays on miscellaneous subjects. His critical essays, although sometimes marred by his extra-literary prejudices, entitle him to be placed in the foremost ranks of English critics. His style has no blemishes, and is particularly free from mannerism of any kind. Like Addison and Dr. Johnson, his language is always dignified. He possesses a quite satirical humour, and has more literary allusions than any of his predecessors except Charles Lamb. According to Hugh Walker, he is unsurpassable for wealth of intellect and imagination.

Thomas de Quincey has left little that is not close to, if not within, the province of the essays. Like Lamb and Hazlitt, he is frankly personal and his best essays are autobiographical. Though his intellect in subtle and acute, he is at his best when he leaves the world of fact and leads us into his dreams and visions. His chief merit to fame rests on his famous "*Confessions of on Opium Eater*" and his group of criticism on his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb and Hazlitt.

The Victorian Age saw the birth of a new genre, the Historical Essay. Macaulay may be looked upon as the founder of this new type. Among his essays the best are those which he wrote on English history. He has brought to the composition of his essays a mind which is richly stored with detail and brutally clear in its convictions.

Among other essayists of the Victorian Age, mention may be made of Henry Newman, Ruskin and Walter Pater. Newman is the master of a supple prose, and at times of a highly wrought style. Ruskin's style is rich, ornate, and full of gorgeous imagery. Pater writes in a prose of rare beauty. He uses the essay for the expression of exquisite artistic sensation. His "*Appreciations*" remains his best work in this direction and is the best exposition of his aesthetic theories.

The twentieth century has proved to be a fertile ground for the development of the essay. It has yielded a rich and varied harvest. The innumerable daily papers and weekly and monthly periodicals provide an unlimited scope for the essayists. The most important of the modern essayists, whose essays reveal the charm of their persona-

lities, are G K. Chesterton, E.V. Lucas, A. G. Gardiner and Robert Lynd.

G.K. Chesterton deserves a high reputation as an essayist and critic of literary and social subjects. His style is remarkable for its ingenuity, a curious sort of humour, and its paradoxes and epigrams.

E.V. Lucas has an inexhaustible store of new subjects because he has an observant, sympathetic eye that makes all life its peculiar province. There is nothing in the least obtrusive, hard, or forensic about Lucas' writings. They belong to the tender, graceful tradition of Charles Lamb.

A. G. Gardiner is perhaps the most delightful of the modern essayists. His famous essays are collected in the volumes "*Pebbles on the Shore*", "*Leaves in the Wind*" and "*Many Furrows.*" He has personality and humour, a background of literature, depth and thoughfulness, and he has polished his style to perfection. His essays are full of amusing anecdotes and homely illustrations drawn from everyday experience and they read like short stories.

32

Style is the Man

"Literature" says Cardinal Newman, himself a great master of style, "is the personal use or exercise of language. While ordinary persons use language as they find it, the man of genius uses it indeed according to his own peculiarities." This statement derives its validity from the practice of men of letters.

There is a profand and intimate relationship between the artist and his style. According to Buffon, style is the man himself. It is the opinion of Schopenhauer that style is the physiognomy of the soul. To quote Gosse : "Style is the medium by which the temperament is transferred to the written speech." Pope has stated : "Style is the dress of thought". In other words, it is an ornament, an additional quality. Carlyle regards style as "the skin of an artist." Freud has further elaborated this very statement : "Style is not like a coat that can be put off, but like the skin, an essential part of the living organism " All these definitions put emphasis on the point that true style corresponds to the temper of the writer : it is solemn, ornamental, severe, cold, or gay in accordance with his personality. It is a reflection of the author's personality, and therefore it is not merely external or mechanical. It should be, as De Quincey says, an incarnation of thought.

Taine has formulated a new formula of evaluation which he applies to the work of art. He has interpreted literature in a rigorously scientific way by "the application of his famous formula of the race, the *milieu*, and the moment ; meaning by race, the hereditary temperament and disposition of a people ; by *milieu* ; the totality of their surroundings, their climate, physical environment, political institutions and the like ; and by moment, the spirit of the period, or that particular stage of national development which has been reached at any given time. Taine's theory of literary evaluation by which he has proved the impersonality of the author is unsatisfactory. Neglecting the individual, he naturally neglects personality as an originating force. Flaubert and T. S. Eliot are also opposed to the subjective theory of art.

Matthew Arnold has given his views in favour of the expression of personality in art : "The language is formed to convey not the object

alone, but likewise the character, mood and intention of the person who is representing it." Croce, a great critic, has expressed the view that work of art is always internal, and that which is called external is not work of art. According to him, "The style of a writer is a true impression of his inner self, if any one would write a clear style, let him first have clearness in his soul, and if any one would write a great style, let him see to it that he has a great character. It is the personal character of the writer that brings his meanings before his readers, not artifices of his talent." The above criticism goes to give testimony that style is pre-eminently the product of the author's personality, a transparent record of his intellectual, spiritual and artistic development.

Middleton Murray has given the characteristics of a good style. According to him, it is a combination of the maximum of personality with the maximum of impersonality. To quote Lamborn : "To a poet in a lover's mood, the sea smiles with him in his joy, the winds whisper the name of his beloved, the stars look down on him like friendly eyes; to the same poet in another mood, the same sea looks grim and cruel, the winds mocks his sighs, and the cold stars watch him with a passionless inscrutable gaze."

Walter Pater, as a critic, looks for the "expressive" thing in a work of art, that which really expresses the essential personality of an author —— the peculiar quality which is gist of him and distinguishes him from everything else that ever was. This peculiar quality, or the expressive thing in an author, manifests itself in thought or sentiment, and in style ; and according to Pater, thought on sentiment and style are one. This idea of the oneness of thought or sentiment and style is the chief contribution of Pater to criticism, and is elaborated in his essay on "Style."

Only transcribing facts without something of one's humour, of a vision within, does not come in the domain of fine art. It is rather a skilled work as the drafting of an act of parliament. Even a historian who bases his writings on facts, is artist if his work is coloured with his own humour, with his own vision. Literary art is the representation of such fact as is connected with the soul of a specific personality, in its preferences, its volition and power. Thus, according to Pater, the artist seeks to present not fact, but his 'sense of facts'. Instead of giving a 'photographic imitation' of reality, he gives us a trascription of his vision of it. Truth is also necessary in art, because 'there can be no merit, no craft at all, without that.' For him it lies in the accurate presentation of the sense of fact. All beauty is in the long run only fineness of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within.

Style, then, means the way in which the writer uses the words for the purpose of expressing or conveying the "expressive thing" in him. In other words, it expresses his peculiar personality. When words are used to impress the reader, without really conveying any striking idea,

then it is not style, but merely a trick of style. The true style corresponds to the temper of the Writer ; it is solemn, ornamental, severe or gay in accordance with his personality. This is an emphatic refutation of Pope's maxim that "style is the dress of thought." Pater comes in accordance with the views of Schopenhauer, who has defined style "as the physiognomy of the soul."

The literary artist is of necessity a scholar, and in what he proposes to do will have in mind the scholar and the scholarly conscience. He chooses a vocabulary faithful to the colouring of his own spirit, and in the strictest sense original. Thought which is own will hardly permit itself to be shaped into the fashion of someone else's expression. Style is the personal use or exercise of language.

The artist, says Schiller, may be known rather by what he omits ; and in literature too, the true artist may be best recognised by his tact of omission. The beauty of literary style consists in the removal of surplusage. Gustava Flaubert is martyr of literary style. To him. one word expresses one thought. He used to say that there are no beautiful thoughts without beautiful form, and conversely. It is impossible to detach the form from the idea, for the idea only exists by virtue of the form. The true artist pays great attention to words, and endeavours for the word's adjustment to its meaning. He will tolerate no short-cuts, no hackneyed illustrations, no affectation of learning designed for the unlearned. He avoids all that is superfluos, facile and purely ornamental. He will be a lover of words, opposing the constant degradation of language by those, who use it carelessly.

Walter Pater also lays stress on unity in a work of art. The one essential thing is the architectural conception of work, which foresees the end in the beginning and never loses sight of it, till the last sentence does but with undiminished vigour, unfold and justify the first. Style is the shape that the whole takes when every part has fallen into its place according to the design which the artist has in his mind. All good literature must be directed both by mind and soul ; the mind giving the logical structure, the soul lending the personal appeal and sublimity. All art embodies the soul of the artist ; the artist is visible through his style, as the style is the man himself.

The statement 'Art lies in the concealment of Art' means that the highest type of art is that which is so natural that the artist has made no effort in producing that art. In other words, it should be free from all traces of artificiality, strain or effort. Like the unpremeditated song of Shelley's Skylark, it should have an air of spontaneity about it.

33 Criticism : Its Nature and Functions

Literary criticism offers a bewildering variety of theory and practice. There is hardly a critic, from Aristotle onward, who has not said something on the nature and function of criticism. The monumental "*Oxford New English Dictionary*" defines criticism as "the art of estimating the qualities and character of literary or artistic work." It also quotes Dryden's definition of criticism as "the standard of judging well" and Dowden's as "the effort to see things as they are, without partiality, without obtrusion of personal liking or disliking."

Webster's "*New International*" defines criticism as "the art of judging or evaluation with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of art or literature."

Shipley in his "*Dictionary of World Literature*" describes criticism as "the conscious evaluation or appreciation of a work of art, either according to the critic's personal taste or according to some accepted aesthetic ideas."

In the French Encyclopaedia (*La Grande Encyclopedie*) emphasis is laid on the duty of judgment, although it is admitted that now an increasing importance is given to explication.

The German Encyclopaedia (*Der Grosse Brockhaus*) lays emphasis on judgment, but urges comparative standards : "Literary aesthetic criticism concerns itself preferably with examination whether a writing conforms to the material and formal laws of beauty accepted at the time it was composed."

The American "*Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*" pronounces criticism to be "the appreciation or estimation of works of art, an activity that would seem to include the exercise of taste and hence an avowal of preference."

Middleton Murray says : "The critic has not merely the right, but the duty to judge between Homer and Shakespeare, between Dante and Milton. The function of true criticism is to establish a definite hierarchy among the great artists of the past, as well as to test the production of the present."

Saint-Beauve says that "criticism should ameliorate society by restoring morals, by promoting healthy tastes, and by cultivating the best traditions in literature."

To Matthew Arnold, criticism is a "disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world."

Victor Hugo remarks : "Is the work good or bad ?———that's criticism's domain."

To Saintsbury, literary criticism is "that function of judgment which busies itself with the goodness or badness, the success or ill-success, of literature from the purely literary point of view."

Sir Herbert Read says of literary criticism that it is "valuation", by some standard, of the worth of literature. The standard may be purely aesthetic, or social or ethical in nature.

Walter Pater says : "Criticism is the art of interpreting art. It serves as intermediary between the author and the reader by explaining the one to the other."

According to Carlyle, "criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired, between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning but understand not their deeper import."

Henry James defines criticism as "a reasonable account of the feeling's inspired in the critic by the book he is going to criticise." The emphasis is on the word "reasonable."

Dr. F. R. Leavis says : "What literary criticism undertakes is the profitable discussion of literature." Here the word 'profitable' has been given a very special and unusual meaning. What Dr. Leavis actually looks for in literature is 'the embodiment of positive life-enhancing values."

In common parlance, however, criticism has been regarded as synonymous with fault-finding. Such a view of the function of criticism has become outmoded. No one today agrees that the function of criticism is merely to lay open the sores and expose the faults of literary artists and their works. The modern critic believes that the function of criticism is not fault-finding, but making a just evaluation of an artist's work without exhibiting any frown or favour at what he has produced. T. S. Eliot makes the position very clear in his famous essay, "*The Functions of Criticism.*" He points out : "The critic should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible, in the common pursuit of true judgment."

If mere fault-finding is not the function of criticism, is it the function of criticism to dwell indiscriminately only on the excellences

of the artist's work? Can we take Addison's view that "The true critic will dwell on excellences rather than on imperfections" as our guiding principle in criticising works of art? This view does not appear to be very sound. Such an eulogistic criticism would appear sugary just as the condemnatory criticism smacks of blackballing even good and desirable artists. Appreciative and eulogistic criticism does not help in arriving at the truth and real worth of an artist and his work of art. It just gives one-sided picture which cannot be accepted by a man of discerning judgment. There is something fishy is Swinburne's 'soft remarks' on the poetry of Collins, Carlyle's laudatory references to Burns' Poetry, Hazlitt's hyperbolic praise of Wordsworth and Paters' indiscriminate eulogy of the Italian Renaissance artists. All this laudatory criticism does not enable us to have a full view of the artist's personality and the real value of his work. It fails to come to the standard of impartial and fair criticism.

Criticism has its own importance in the evaluation of literature; and without the conscientious efforts of a critic to illuminate works of creative art a proper appreciation of literary works produced by great creative artists would not be possible. A critic is the ordinary reader's philosopher and guide in initiating him into the mysteries of created art. Without the critic's guidance the reader would fail to comprehend his author's full meaning, for unaided by the critic's penetrating observation of the work of art, he may easily gloss over beauties which may not greet his eyes at the surface. It is the great function of the criticism to evaluate properly the works of great artists so that the common reader may be able to arrive at the real worth of an artist.

Evaluative criticism seeks to arrive at a definite judgment on the final, ultimate value or worthwhileness of a literary work in and for itself, as well as to determine its place and magnitude in the galaxy of literature.

The critic who is engaged in evaluative criticism has to be broad-minded, catholic and unprejudiced in his approach to literature and works of literary art. It is not his business either to condemn a work of art or to extol it sky-high. He is neither a condemner nor an eulogist. He is a critic, and to be successful in his function of evaluation, he has to bring out both the merits and demerits of a work of art so that a proper appreciation of the work may be possible. The critic whose primary aim is evaluation of literature should be guided by no consideration except truth. He should neither be partial nor have any partisan spirit.

Closely allied to the evaluative function of criticism is its interpretative function. A critic is not only an evaluator but also an interpreter. It is one of the important functions of criticism to interpret a work of art according to the critic's light. The artist sometimes hurries through his work without clarifying his vision and without placing all his cards on the table. He is allusive, recondite and

abstruse. It is the function of crticism to interpret such work of art according to the critic's understanding and vision of life.

One of the Important functions of criticism is to promote appreciation and enjoyment of literature. A critic is a man of taste and he derives intense pleasure and refined enjoyment from the books he reads. When he writes criticism, he tries to express and communicate his own aesthetic pleasure to others. H. L. Mencken says : "The function of a genuine critic of art is to provoke the reaction between the work of art and the spectator. The spectator, unaided and untutored, stands unmoved ; he sees the work of art, but it fails to make any intelligible impression on him; if he were spontaneously sensitive to it there would be no need for criticism."

Moulton says that literature should be judged on sicentific principles. He believes in scientific truth and scientific analysis. The critic should take literature as something material. He should make a division in various types of literature, but he should not fix priorties or preferences. This view seem to be unsound. Literature grows out of the personality of the writer and it addresses itself to personality of the reader. Hence the element of personal liking or disliking in literary criticism. Moulton's view is erroneous ; literature and science cannot be placed in the same compartment.

Donald A Stauffer asserts that the critic has three roles : "as an individual responding to the work of art, as interpreter to an audience, and finally as judge." In actual practice, however, these various functions of criticism pass over into one another and it becomes difficult to draw a sharp line between them. Whether criticism is performing its explanatory function or interpretative function, a judgment of some sort is necessarily implied. Even the most autobiographical statements are not without some sort of judgment. Literary criticism, therefore, performs three-fold function.

34 Modern Literary Criticism

Modern literary criticism appears to be a maze of specialized tastes, techniques and terminology. New discoveries and researches in the fields of science, anthropology, sociology, psychology and semantics has brought about a drastic revolution in the critical outlook, technique and works. Stanely Edgar Hyman has defined modern literary criticism as "the organized use of non-literary techniques and bodies of knowledge to obtain insight into literature." By 'non-literary techniques' he means things like psycho-analytic associations and semantic translations. And the 'non literary bodies of knowledge' range from primitive myths and rituals to the Marxian approach to society. The result is that various approaches of criticism have tended to merge into one another and the concept of "critical monism" has almost been shattered. But even then it is worthwhile to study the relative merits and limitations of some distinct approaches of literary criticism that have come to establish themselves.

Of the various approaches of literary criticism, the moral approach is undoubtedly the oldest one. Plato believed in the moralistic function of criticism. His main concern was with the moral effect the poet might have in his ideal "*Republic*." Horace also recognised the didactic function of criticism. He said : "Poets desire either to improve or to please, or to unite the agreeable and profitable. You will win every vote if you blend what is improving with what pleases, and at once delight and instruct the reader." Dr. Johnson also judged the moral content of the writers in "*The Lives of the Poets*." Matthew Arnold was also a staunch pleader of the moralistic tone of art.

In the twentieth century, the impulse towards moral evaluation continued in T. S Eliot and Dr. F. R. Leavis. T. S Eliot has clearly stated : "The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards." Again he says : "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint."

The psychological approach to literature is comparatively of recent origin. It started with the publication of Freud's "*The*

Interpretation of Dreams," and gathered momentum by the additional influence of Adler's concept of inferiority complex and of Jung's theory of "collective unconscious." The psychological approach to criticism makes possible a deeper and better understanding of literature. It aims at "the search for realities of the self-behind social masks." It breaks the personality of the writer and tries to penetrate straight into the inner motives and impulses.

I. A. Richards has pointed out that the new psychological knowledge provides a more precise language for the discussion of creative process.

Almost as significant as the psychological approach of literary criticism is the sociological approach. The basic conviction of this critical approach is that literature is a social institution and as such it is related to a given social situation, to an economic, social and political system. The practitioners of this type of criticism believe that the investigation of the relationship between literature and society intensifies one's aesthetic response to a work of art. A work of art, they argue, should not be treated as autonomous and self-explanatory. It has its roots in the social milieu. It should be, therefore, studied in that context.

One special branch of the sociological criticism is Marxist criticism. The Marxist critics regard literature as a mirror of society. They believe that art is not created in a vacuum; it is the work not simply of a person but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which he is an important, because articulate part. They are, therefore, more interested in understanding the social milieu and the effects it has on the creative artist.

V. W. Brooks and L. C Knights have made use of the sociological approach without believing in a particular political ideology and have made it a vigorous force in criticism.

The most influential approach of literary criticism in modern times is the formalistic one. It is also known as aesthetic, taxtual or ontological approach. Formalistic criticism starts with the basic conviction that a work of art has a right to exist in its own way, with its own kind of life. It is, therefore, to be judged from purely aesthetic standards, and not as a vehicle of social, religious, moral or political ideas. The text of a work of art is the most important thing and therefore it must be studied very closely. Ezra Pound once said: "You can spot the bad critic when he starts discussing the poet and not the poem." Likewise T. S. Eliot remarked : "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poem."

The chief merit of this approach is that it sends us back to the work itself with illumination. Its chief limitation is that sometimes in minute analysis of the parts of a literary piece its totality is forgotten. L. C. Knights and F. R. Leavis have accused Empson and I. A. Richards on this ground.

The archetypal approach of criticism studies literature in the light of myth. It is also known as totemic, mythological, or ritualistic approach. It is gaining much popularity with some modern critics like Maud Bodkin , Richard Chase, Francis Furgusson. These critics regard the creative artist as a "shaman, a myth maker, speaking out of his unconscience a primordial truth.

The archetypal approach of criticism has its own limitations. It does not lead to on evaluation of literature but it explains why a particular work of art appeals to mankind.

After examining the various approaches of literary criticism, one comes to the conclusion that no single approach is complete in itself. Each has its own merits and limitations. R. P. Blackmur has argued movingly against excessive faith in a single approach. He says : Facts cannot be exhibited without comment, and comment involves the generality of the mind." A critic, therefore, need not limit himself to a single approach. Any rational approach is valid to literature if it sends the reader to the work itself with illumination. And hence it may be properly called critical.

35

Criticism and Creation

It was a practice among the ancient Greeks and Romans to regard criticism and creation as two distinct adventures in the field of literature. Those who were creative artists were required to produce works of art, and it was left entirely to critics to pronounce judgments on their creative excellence, and give them their due place in the hierarchy of literature.

A change came in this bifurcation of functions at a time when Seneca, the great tragedy writer of Rome, held the reins of the literary world of his times in his hands. He made the observation that the task of judging the works of the creative artists could only be performed by the creative artists themselves rather than by a group of professional critics who were not conversant with the theories of creation, and could not therefore pronounce judgments on a work of art. Seneca relegated critics to lower position, and placed creative artists on a higher pedestal.

Seneca's sneering contempt of critics and the unusual exaltation of creative artists was later on voiced in England by the great classicist, Ben Jonson, who stated that there was no bond of attachment and kinship between the creative artist and the critics and creation and criticism were opposed, conflicting and mutually exclusive types of activity carried on by two distinct types of mind. Ben Jonson was later on supported by a number of creative artists, who claimed a position of special privilege for the poet and the creative artists, and made the critic an outcast from the heirarchy of literary luminaries.

It is commonly believed that the temperaments of the critic and the creative artist are quite different. The creative artist is personal and subjective, whereas a critic is impersonal and detached. The creative artist is synthetic, while the critic is analytic. It is the business of the creative artist to bring things together in a harmonious whole, while it is the job of the critic to dissect and analyse the synthetic whole into its component parts. The creative artist seeks to bring things together, and the critic is out to disjoin them. The critic is fettered by rules and regulations, which seem to have no binding on the creative artist.

R. A. Scott James compares the artist to a pioneer who has surveyed the jungle, cut a way through it with great industry and labour, whereas a critic is like an inspector who examines the track left behind the poineer and passes judgment whether the pioneering work has been done in a proper manner or not.

The views expressed above need not be taken to be final. There is some truth and force in the arguments of the critics in dividing kingdoms for the critic and the creative artist, but it is not that they cannot enter into each others' territory. Creative artists and critics are not enemies. They do not bear any grudge and hostility against each other. In fact, creative artists and critics are brothers, and the prosperity of literature rests on their united and harmonious working. Critics, who have not composed poems or dramas, can be evaluators of the works of creative artists, and creative artists, in their turn, can examine from time to time the kind of criticism produced by professional critics.

Take up, for example, the poetry of the Romantics, particularly the creative work of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Both these romantic poets had made a critical study of the works of the Augustan Age and had spent considerable time in studying critically the poetry of Pope, Dryden, Dr. Johnson and their followers. They were dissatisfied with their approach to nature and human life, and with the kind of poetic language employed by them in poetic compositions. So they departed from their practices and traditions and adopted a novel track for themselves.

The artist has to be a critic. He considers his methods, what effects he hopes to produce on others, what devices he may employ to achieve these effects. The 'study' may take place either on the conscious or on the unconscious level. The critical deliberation and inspiration are both present in the mental processes of artists.

The creation of a great artist implies a great critical effort behind it. It is the business of the critical power, says Matthew Arnold, to make the best ideas prevail. He makes a comparison between Byron and Goethe to illustrate his point. "Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much ; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not".

The counter-part of the above view should also be recognised. If in every creative artist there is something of the critical discernment, there is in every critic something of the constructive and creative ability, and there are a few fortunate and elevated literary artists in whom both the creative and critical faculties are equally well developed. Dryden, Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold and T.S. Eliot have their place of importance both in the critical as well as creative artists. All of them are critics as well as creative artists.

It is further to be noted that a critic in evaluating and examining a piece of creative art experiences kindered feelings of creative creation. He gets into the spirit of the creative artist and tries "to seize upon the inside of the creative mood of the writer, the complex of emotions and ideas that lay at the core of the work and from which it originated". "No critic", says R.A. Scott James, "can appreciate a work of art till he has reconstructed in his own mind the mental vision constructed by the artist". Thus the critic treads closely on the track of the artist. What the artist has constructed, the critic only reconstructs. The main difference in their constructive process is, that whereas the artist constructs from external impressions or some impression of inner life, the critic constructs from books produced by the creative artists. In each case there is a constructive process —— the first reconstructing impressions drawn from life, and the other reconstructing impressions drawn from literature. The base of the creative artist is life with its wide and varied pictures, the base of the critic's work is literature built on the observation of life by the creative artist. Both are creators, one from life, another from literature.

According to Oscar Wild, "the highest criticism, being the purest form of personal impression, is in its way more creative than creation, as it has least reference to any standard external to itself, and is, in fact, its own reason for existing, and, as the Greeks would put it, in itself and to itself an end".